

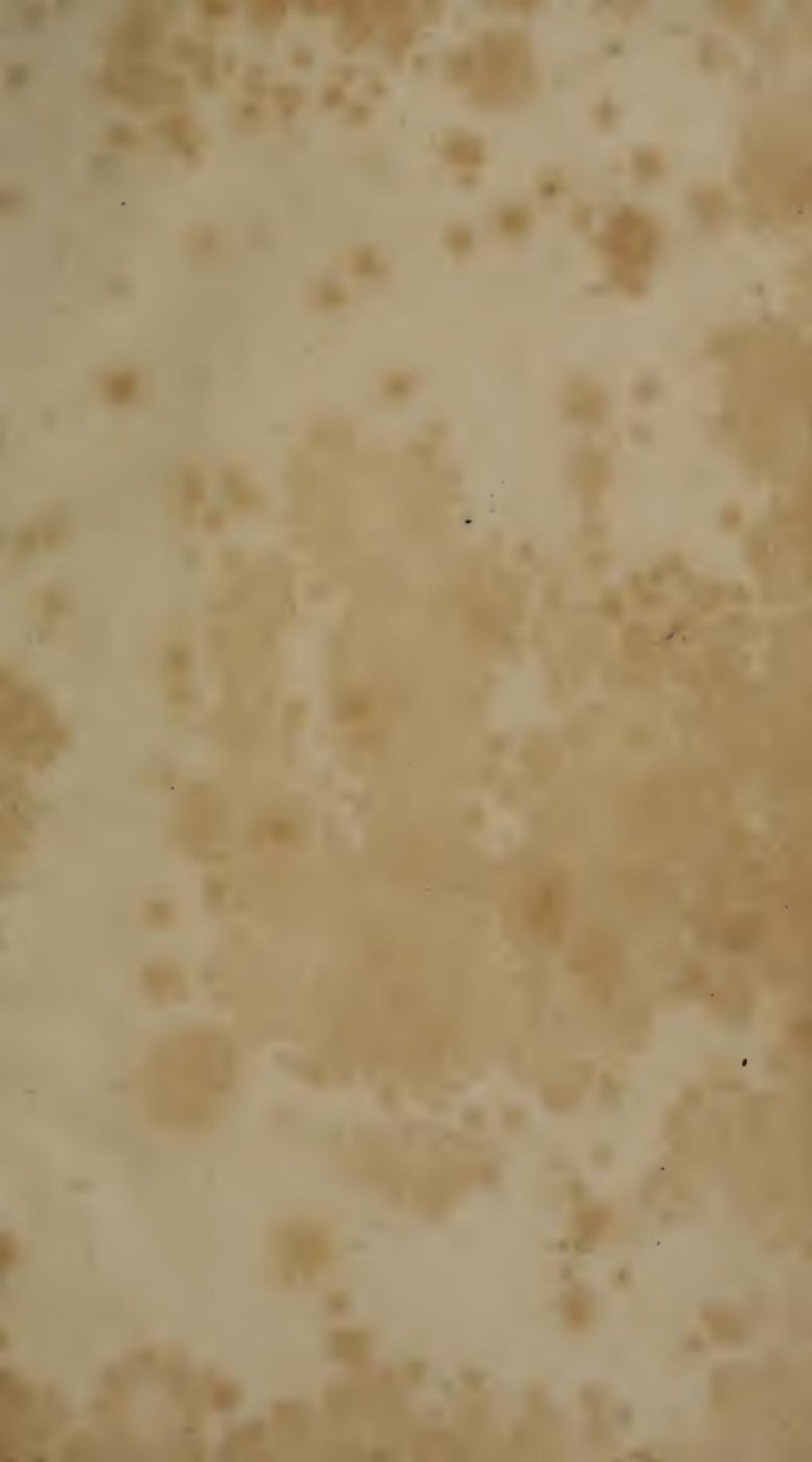
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London 1860

RORY O'MORE:

A NATIONAL ROMANCE.

BY

SAMUEL LOVER, Esq.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

"' There's luck in odd numbers,' says Rory O'More."

FIFTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1837.



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RORY O'MORE.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH RORY REMEMBERS THE OLD SAYING OF "PUT THAT IN YOUR PIPE AND SMOKE IT."

WHEN Rory could not give the countersign nor produce a pass, the sentinel told him he was his prisoner, and must remain in his custody until the guard should be relieved ; to which Rory made not the least objection.

To all the soldier's questions as to where he had been and what brought him out at that hour of the night, Rory gave ready but evasive answers, until, the first moment of surprise being past, he had time to invent such replies as would least embarrass him in any subsequent

quent examination he might undergo ; and was so far successful, that the soldier believed him to be a peasant who was abroad at that hour through his own ignorance.

Rory now thought of General Hoche's letter, and began to feel uneasy at the possession of such a document. Under the *surveillance* of the sentinel he could not well manage to tear it ; and even if he had, it being found near the spot, would prove a suspicious circumstance against him. In this dilemma, an ingenious thought occurred to him. Stooping, as it were to rub his leg, he soiled his fingers with the mud upon his shoes, and then introducing his hand into the pocket which held the letter, he dabbed it with the dirt to take off its look of freshness, and doubled it together in narrow folds, so as to resemble those billets of paper which the Irish peasantry so commonly stick in their hats for the purpose of lighting their pipes. This, the thin texture of the foreign paper enabled him the better to do ; and Rory then stuck the

dangerous document into his hatband, where he trusted to its remaining without exciting suspicion.

In about half an hour the guard was relieved, and Rory was handed over to the patrole, who marched him into the guard-house of the barrack, up to whose very walls it was his ill luck to have directed his steps on leaving the colonel's house. Rory entered the place of durance with the greatest composure, and began talking to the soldiers with the most admirable *nonchalance*.

"Faix, I'm glad I had the luck to fall in with you!" said he, "for I didn't know where in the world to go; and here I am undher a good roof, with a fine fire in the place."

The soldiers did not attend to him much, but crowded round the fire, while the serjeant went to make his report to the officer of the guard that a prisoner had been brought in.

This officer happened to be a very raw ensign, who having lately joined, and being moreover by nature a consequential coxcomb, was

fond of giving himself all the airs in which a position of authority could permit him to indulge, much to his own personal delight and the good of his majesty's service.

When the serjeant had announced his own presence before his superior officer by the respectful enunciation of "Plase your honour," he stood as upright as his own halberd—and he had just about as much brains,—with his arms and hands stuck straight and close to his side, until the ensign thought fit to lift his gooseberry eyes from the novel he was reading. When he vouchsafed to look at the serjeant, he said, "What's your business?"

"The pattherowl, your honour, has tuk a presner."

"Where did they make the arrest?"

"The rest, your honour? there's no more o' them, your honour."

"I say, where did they capture him?"

"Oh! they did nothing to him, your honour, until they have your honour's ordhers."

"Confound you! I say, where did they take him?"

"They have tuk him into the guard-house,
your honour."

"You horrid individual! I mean, where was
he found?"

"In the sthreet, your honour."

"You beast! What street?"

"Buttermilk-sthreet, your honour."

"Near the barrack?"

"Yis, your honour."

"Has he any accomplices?"

"We have not searched him yet, your ho-
nour."

"Confound you!—I mean, was he in com-
pany?"

"Yis, your honour; he says he was in com-
pany, but they turned him out, your honour."

"Then he was alone?"

"Yis, your honour."

"Have you searched him?"

"No, your honour."

"Demneetion, sir! You should always
search a prisoner the first thing—you don't
know but a prisoner may have concealed arms

or treasonable papers on his person. Search him directly."

"Yis, your honour," said the serjeant, raising his arm like the handle of a pump, and when he had it at full length, doubling it up from his elbow till his hand, as flat as a fish-knife, touched his head: then deliberately reversing all these motions until his arm was back again at his side, he turned on his heel, and was leaving the room, when the ensign, calling him back again, said, with an air of great authority,

"I expect never to hear of such a gross breach of discipline and neglect of duty again: never report a prisoner in my presence without being able to answer all such important questions as I have been asking you; and for this purpose let your first duty be always to search him directly. Go, now, and report to me again when the person of this prisoner has undergone rigid inspection. Retire!"

"Yis, your honour," said the serjeant, repeating his salute with his usual solemnity,

and stalking from the room into the guard-house.

Now, the room where the officer sat was a small apartment partitioned off the guard-house ; and Rory, whose ears were open, heard every word of the officer's magniloquence and the serjeant's stupidity ; and so soon as he heard the order about searching, and the words "treasonable papers," he thought that to let the letter remain in existence would be only running an unnecessary risk ; so he very deliberately approached the fire, and having taken Hoche's letter from his hatband, he spoke to some soldiers who were sitting round the hearth all unmindful of what was going forward between the officer and the serjeant, and, handing them the letter twisted up in the form of a match for lighting a pipe, he said,

"I beg your pardon for being so throuble-some, gintlemen, but would you oblige me to light this taste of paper for me to kindle my pipe ? for indeed it 's mighty cowld, and I 'm lost with the wet."

One of the soldiers did as he required ; for the request was so natural, and Rory's manner so cool, that no suspicion was awakened of the importance of the document on whose destruction Rory's life or death depended, and the lighted paper was handed to him over the shoulders of the party that enclosed the fire, and Rory lighted his pipe with a self-possession that would have done honour to an American Indian. From the wetting the letter had sustained while exposed in Rory's hat, it burned slowly ; so, when he heard the serjeant coming from the officer's room, and his feigned match not yet consumed, he leaned over the back of the soldier who had obliged him, and saying, "Thank you kindly, sir," he threw the remainder of the paper into the fire, just as the serjeant returned to execute the ensign's order.

The search instituted upon Rory's person produced no evidence against him. When it was over, he sat down and smoked his pipe very contentedly. In a few minutes another

prisoner made his appearance, when a second party, who had been relieving guard, came in. This man was making loud protestations that he was not the person the soldiers took him for ; but his declarations to this effect seemed to produce no belief on the part of the guard.

“ I wonder you were not afraid to come to the place again, after having escaped once before,” said one of the sentinels who brought him in.

“ I tell you again, I never was there before,” said the man.

“ Bother !” said the sentinel ; “ you won’t do an old soldier that way.”

“ By this and that,” said the prisoner.

“ Whish, whish !” said the soldier ; “ sure we were looking for you before : however, you contrived to give us the slip.”

“ I gave you no slip,” said the prisoner : “ I tell you again, ’twas the first time I was there.”

“ Fudge !” said the soldier : “ how did the bell ring ?”

" Devil a bell I rung," said the man.

Rory understood in an instant how this mystification took place : he suspected at once this must be Darby, who had thrown the pebbles that startled Betty so much ; and, while he laughed in his sleeve at the poor husband being mistaken for the person who had disturbed the colonel's house, he continued to smoke his pipe with apparent indifference to all that was going forward, and did not as much as look up at the prisoner. It was absurd and whimsical enough, certainly, that Betty should first have mistaken him for Darby, and then that Darby should be mistaken by the soldiers for him. Darby still continued to protest his innocence of any previous approach to the house ; but the soldiers could not be persuaded out of their senses, as they themselves said ; and so the affair concluded by Darby being desired to sit down beside his fellow-prisoner.

Rory now looked at him, to see what sort of a bargain Betty had made in a husband, and,

to his surprise, he beheld one of the men he had seen in the cellar. A momentary look of recognition passed between them, and then they withdrew their eyes, lest the bystanders should notice their intelligence.

"Where will the adventures of this night end!" thought Rory to himself.

But all adventures must have an end at last, and this chapter of Rory's accidents came to a close next morning; in the mean time, however, Rory stretched himself on the guard-bed when he had finished his pipe, and slept soundly. It may be wondered at that he could sleep under such exciting circumstances, and still in a perilous situation: but when we remember all the fatigues he had gone through the preceding day, it does not seem extraordinary that sleep should have favoured one like Rory, who was always full of hope, and did not know what fear meant.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT ONE MAN'S SIN MAY PROVE
ANOTHER MAN'S SALVATION.

IN the morning he was awoke by a prodigious drumming; and various other drummings, and fifings, and trumpetings, &c. went forward, with paradings and such military formula: these being finished, Rory and Darby were conducted from the guard-house, and led into the presence of the colonel, whom Rory recognised for his coal-hole acquaintance of the preceding night.

Rory, on being questioned as to what brought him into the streets at such an hour, said that he was a stranger in the town; that it being

market-day, he went with some “boys” to have some drink, and that he became drowsy and fell asleep in a public-house; that subsequently he was awoke, and that he then saw other people in the room; that a quarrel arose; that they did not seem to like his company, and “at last,” said Rory, “they gave me a hint to go.”

“What hint did they give you?” said the colonel.

“They kicked me down stairs, your honour,” said Rory.

A laugh followed Rory’s exposition of what a hint was, and he thought it in his favour; for when serious charges and inquiries are going forward, Momus is the best counsel a prisoner can retain.

“That’s rather a strong hint,” said the colonel.

“I thought so myself, your honour,” said Rory; “and so when they kicked me down stairs, I suspected it was time to go.”

“But, my good fellow,” said the colonel,

noticing Rory's fine proportions and bold eye, though Rory endeavoured to look as innocent as he could, "I don't think you seem like a fellow that would take such a hint quietly."

"Why, your honour, I'm behowlden to you for your good opinion, and indeed it's thtrue, I'm proud to say; but what could I do agin a dozen. I offered to bate them all round singly; but they would not listen to rayson, and so they shoved me outside the door; and there I was in the sthreet, knowin' no more than the child unborn where to turn, or where to go look for a bed."

"I'll have the keeper of that public-house punished for having it open at such an hour.—Where is it?"

"Indeed and I don't know," said Rory.

The colonel looked incredulous. He questioned Rory more closely, who fenced very ingeniously; but still the suspicions of the colonel were excited, and he said at last,

"Your account of yourself, my good fellow, is rather confused."

"No wondher, your honour, when I was dhrunk all the time."

"That won't do," said the colonel, who continued in a severer tone,—“I suspect you're a deep fellow, sir, and know more than you choose to tell, and therefore I'll hand you over to the serjeant.—Here, serjeant.” That functionary advanced. “Serjeant,” said the colonel, “take this fellow to the halberds,—let the drummers give him a dozen, and see if that will refresh his memory.”

Rory's heart almost burst with indignation at the thought of the degradation, and he became first as red as crimson and then as pale as death with rage.

“Ha!” said the colonel, seeming to enjoy the pallor his threat had produced, and which he mistook for fear,—“we'll see, my fine fellow, what you think of the hints the drummers will give you !”

In an instant Rory's invention came to his aid ; and though, could he have indulged his desire, he would have had the colonel placed

before him on equal terms, and could have plucked out his tyrannous heart for the degradation he would inflict on him, still he kept down his rising wrath, and let finesse accomplish what he knew force could never achieve ; so, with as much calmness as he could muster, he said,

“ I ’d be sorry, sir, to put the sarjeant to so much throuble ; and, if you ’ll be good enough to clear the room, I ’ll tell you something you ’d like to know, sir.”

“ You may tell it out before all,” said the colonel.

“ Plaze your honour,” said Rory, who now had recovered his self-command, and enjoyed the thought of foiling cruelty by craft,—“ your honour, it ’s something you wouldn’t be *plazed* every one should hear.”

“ How shouldn’t I be pleased ? There ’s nothing you can tell, fellow, that I should care if the whole world knew.”

“ Av coarse not, your honour,” said Rory with affected reverence ; “ but at the same time,

if you b'lieve me, sir, it will be betther for no one but *yourself* to know of it."

"Clear the room, then," said he to the serjeant. "You may remain, Mr. Daw." This was said to the ensign who was officer of the guard.

"No one but yourself, if you plaze, your honour," said Rory.

The colonel at first imagined that this was some desperate fellow who had concealed arms about him, and meant to take his life; but remembering he had been searched in the guard-house, his personal security no longer was matter of question, and there was a certain meaning that Rory threw into his manner which influenced him to grant the prisoner's request to be alone with him.

"Well, what's this wonderful secret you've to tell?" said the colonel when they were alone.

"Why, sir," said Rory, affecting great embarrassment, and rubbing his hand up and down the table before which he stood, as if he

were ashamed of what he had to communicate,
“ I’m loath to tell you a’most, sir, begging
your honour’s pardon ; but——”

“ Quick, sir, quick !” said the colonel impatiently.

“ It’s all thtrue what I towld you, sir, about
bein’ a sstranger in the town, and comin’ over
jist to——”

“ The fact, sirrah !” said the colonel,—“ the
fact—tell me what’s this secret of yours.”

“ Yis, your honour, that’s what I want to
insense your honour about.”

“ You’d incense any one with your delay,
fellow. Come to the fact, I tell you—What’s
this secret ?”

Rory fixed his eyes on the colonel while he
proceeded,

“ You see, sir—I beg your honour’s pardon,
and hope you won’t be offinded with me—but
in the regard of Misther ——” and he lowered
his voice to a mysterious pitch.

“ Who ?” said the colonel, on whom Rory
had his eye fixed like a hawk.

"Misther Scrubbs, sir," said Rory.

The colonel winced: Rory saw he had

"Tented him to the quick;"

and now he felt the game was in his hands.

"What of him?" said the colonel, recovering himself, but yet with a very altered tone of voice to that in which he had hitherto pursued his interrogatories.

"Why, sir, your honour — you'll excuse me, I hope,—and wouldn't offind your honour for the world,—but I thought it best not to mention anything about it while the people was here, becaze people is curious sometimes and might be makin' their remarks; and I thought I could betther give your honour a hint when nobody would be the wiser of it."

"I'm not any wiser myself of it yet," said the colonel.

"No, of coarse, your honour, seein' I was loath to mention the thing a'most, for fear of your honour thinkin' I was takin' a liberty; but the misthiss—*Missis* Scrubbs I mane, your

honour—" and Rory here stuck his eyes into the colonel again.

" Well?" said the colonel.

" I knew she was over here with a *frind*, your honour, and I knew that she did not expec' the masther down—the collecthor, I mane."

" Well," said the colonel.

" And I thought it best to tell her that I heerd the masther is comin' down to-morrow, and av coorse *your honour knows* he would not be plazed if the misthiss wasn't in the place, and might *suspect*, or the like. I hope your honour is not offinded?"

The emphasis on "*your honour knows*" and "*suspect*" was accompanied by sly smiles and winks, and significant nods ; and the colonel saw clearly that Rory was possessed of the knowledge of his intrigue with Mrs. Scrubbs, and that the best thing he could do was to make him his friend ; so he said very gently,

" Offended ! my good fellow, not at all. And so you came over to tell your mistress?"

"I thought it best, sir ; for indeed she is a pleasant lady, and I wouldn't for the world that she'd get into throuble, nor your honour aither."

"Well, here's something to drink my health."

"Oh, your honour, sure I wouldn't."

"I insist upon it," said the colonel, forcing five guineas into Rory's hand, who did all in his power not to take them ; for, though he hesitated not to execute this manœuvre to save his life, he did not like receiving money on a false pretence.

"Indeed, thin, I never intended to take money, nor to tell your honour of it at all—only the misthiss, but for the quare accident that brought me before your honour."

"I'm glad I've seen you," said the colonel, "to reward your fidelity to your mistress : she shall be home before to-morrow."

"Throth, then, I pity her to be obleeged to lave so iligant a gintleman."

"Hush !" said the colonel.

"Mum!" said Rory, winking and laying his finger on his nose: "but sure you're the devil among the women, colonel!"

The colonel was pleased at the compliment paid to his gallantry; and merely saying to Rory, "Be discreet," he called in the persons who were waiting in wonder outside to know what important communication had been going forward.

"This man is free," said the colonel; "I'm quite satisfied with his explanations. And, serjeant, take him with you to the adjutant's office, and let him have a pass."

This was a bit of finesse on the colonel's part, to make it appear that it was on public, not private grounds, he gave Rory his freedom; for at this period a pass from a commanding officer empowered the bearer to go unmolested at all hours, and was entrusted only to emissaries or known friends of government.

The colonel was so thrown off his guard by Rory's *ruse de guerre*, that he never asked his

name ; so Rory obtained his pass without being known, and then turned his face homeward. As he rattled along the road, high in spirits, as men always are when they have conquered difficulties, his head was in a whirl at the retrospect of the various adventures which had befallen him within four-and-twenty hours.

"First, I meet French missionaries" (he meant emissaries, but no matter),—"thin I get all the news o' what 's goin' on that will astonish the world,—thin I get a *rale* letter from Gineral Hoche—Ah ! there 's the murdher !—the letter 's gone. Bad cess to it ! why couldn't I conthrive to keep it? But no matther—afther all, it might be worse, sure ; if 'twas found I'd be hanged.—Not that I'd care so much for that, as the thing being *blown*.—Indeed, I might ha' been hanged maybe, afther all ; only I knew about the colonel's purty doings.—Well, well,—to think that the sins of one woman should save the life of another man ! But that 's the will o' God and the blessed Vargin.—And to think I should not only get

home safe, but have five goolden guineas in my pocket into the bargain!—Throth, Rory, luck's on your side, my boy!"

Now, it was not merely luck was on Rory's side, for he turned all the accidents to good account which would have been thrown away on a fool; and this, after all, is what makes the difference, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, between a lucky and an unlucky man. The unlucky man often plays life's game with good cards, and loses; while the lucky man plays the same game with bad ones, and wins. Circumstances are the rulers of the weak;—they are but the instruments of the wise.

CHAPTER XV.

BEING A MIXTURE OF ROMANCE AND REALITY.

THE interest which De Lacy felt on Rory's return, in listening to the important intelligence he brought, was mingled with amusement at the adventurous way in which he had conducted the enterprise. The loss of the letter he did not much regard, as the most valuable information it could have conveyed was in his possession, namely, the preparation of the extensive armament for the invasion of the island; and, under the circumstances, he not only did not blame Rory for the mishap, but gave him great credit for his courage and intelligence; for Rory had communicated to him every par-

ticular of his adventures. De Lacy blamed De Welskein for holding the unlicensed communion Rory described in his cellar, and assured O'More he was not aware that such was the smuggler's practice when he sent him on his mission.

" You don't imagine, Rory, that I would countenance nor be the companion of such ruffians ?"

" To be sure you wouldn't, sir," said Rory ; " and I hope you don't think I'd suppose such a thing."

" No ; but as you were sent there by me, I wish you to understand——"

" Oh, sir, I don't mind such a trifle," said Rory.

" I don't think it a trifle," said De Lacy.

" But sure, if it was you was there, of coarse he wouldn't have done the like by you, sir."

" He dare not, the rascal ! but that's not enough ; he shouldn't have treated my agent so : but, to be sure, in these affairs one must not be too particular. They say poverty makes

men acquainted with strange bedfellows ; and revolutions must do the same thing."

Yet, much as De Lacy strove to reconcile the thing to his feelings, his delicacy revolted at the scene of brutal debauch that Rory, a pure-hearted peasant, was made the witness and partly the partaker of. De Lacy was in every way an enthusiast : he believed in that high standard of human virtue which could sacrifice all for virtue's sake ; his love of liberty was pure,—unstained by one unholy motive, and however much he might be blamed by those who thought the cause in which he was engaged unjustifiable, or even flagitious, his motives at least were high and noble : they might be called mistaken, but not unworthy.

And of all worldly things did De Lacy think with as high a tone of feeling, and as deep a confidence in humanity. His profession as a soldier, his present exploit as a patriot, and his love as a man, were all undertaken and pursued with a feeling belonging rather to the age of chivalry than the time in which he lived. Or

it might be perhaps more truly said, belonging to his own particular period of existence,—that glorious spring-time when every leaf of life is green, and the autumn of experience has not laid the withering tint of distrust upon one. The age of chivalry, did I say? Oh! every young and noble heart has its own age of chivalry!

De Lacy's love has been once mentioned before—at least glanced at; and it may be as well to give some slight notion of that event, so interesting in most people's lives. Not that De Lacy's love has much to do with the events about to be recorded; but as it will be necessary to touch upon it perhaps elsewhere, the reader may just be given a peep into the affair: besides, it will help to exhibit the refined nature of De Lacy's mind.

He had left behind him in Paris a girl to whom he was deeply attached, and by whom he believed himself to be ardently beloved. But Adèle Verbigny was unworthy of such a love as De Lacy's, inasmuch as she could not un-

derstand it. Love was with her a necessity : she thought it quite indispensable that every young lady should have a lover ; and if that lover was a hero, so much the better. Now, De Lacy happened to be a handsome fellow and a soldier ; and when he volunteered to undertake the dangerous mission to Ireland, she was charmed, because that her *Horace* should be the “saviour of a nation,” &c. &c. she considered a triumph to herself. So, babbling in the exaggerated jargon of the feverish time in which she spoke, she said she offered up the hopes of her heart, &c. upon the altar of Freedom, &c. and desired him go and disenthral his native land from the yoke of tyranny, &c. and return crowned with laurels to enjoy her love, &c.

De Lacy believed the little Parisian felt all she said, and loved her better than ever. While he was yet uncertain of the moment of his departure, he received a peremptory summons from the Directory to start immediately with a government courier to the coast. He

hastened to the house of his Adèle to take a tender farewell. Her mother met him as he entered the apartment.

"Hush!" said she; "Adèle sleeps."

"I have not a moment to wait," said De Lacy; "I'm summoned on the instant to depart."

"You see she sleeps," said the mother: "she cried so much last night at the separation of the lovers in the play, that she was quite overcome. Her nerves have been shattered all day, and she went asleep just now on the sofa to restore herself."

"Sweet soul!" said De Lacy—"poor Adèle! if she wept at a fictitious separation, what would she suffer at a real one! I will not wake her—no—mine be the pain of parting. Tell her," said he tenderly, and he looked at the sleeping girl while he spoke to her mother,— "tell her I go to fulfil my duty to my country. I will return with its blessings and the laurels of victory to lay at her feet, and then I shall be worthy of her." He knelt to kiss her, but

paused. “No,” he said, “I might awake her: this is all I shall take,” and he gently drew a flower from the folds of her dress,—“’tis a type of her beauty, her sweetness, and her innocence!” He then rose and hurried to depart. “Farewell, mother,” said he,—“permit me to call you so,—and tell Adèle why I would not wake her; and will she not love me the better when she knows how much I renounced in relinquishing the parting charm of a kiss and a blessing from her own bright lips!” He could trust himself to say no more, and he rushed from the house.

Adèle’s mother was rather astonished, for the refinement of feeling that had prompted De Lacy was quite unintelligible to her; and, as she snuffed the candles when he left the room, she said, “*Ma foi, que cet homme-là est drôle!*”

The ravings of De Lacy during his dangerous illness had been divided between the recollection of Adèle and anticipation of the intended revolutionary struggle. On his recovery, however, his mind reverted more plea-

surably to the former subject than the latter ; for, to his enfeebled nerves, love was a theme more congenial than war.

In such a frame of mind it was that De Lacy sat in his bed-room, a few days after his recovery, with some papers lying before him, and his eyes resting on the flower he had taken from the bosom of Adèle the night he had parted from her. He thought of the circumstances of that parting ; and as the sleeping girl was recalled to his fancy, his heart went through all the emotions of that parting again, through the influence of an imagination always vivid, but now rendered more delicately sensitive through the agency of that susceptibility of nerve which the languor succeeding a severe illness produces, and the fulness of his heart and the excitement of his fancy found vent in recording his farewell and the emotions of that moment in verse ; and, dedicating to his Adèle the inspiration of his muse, he wrote the following

SONG.

I.

Sleep, my love—sleep, my love,
Wake not to weep, my love,
Though thy sweet eyes are all hidden from me :
Why shouldst thou waken to sorrows like mine, love,
While thou may'st, in dreaming, taste pleasure divine,
love?
For blest are the visions of slumbers like thine, love—
So sleep thee, nor know who says “ Farewell to thee ! ”

II.

Sleep, my love—sleep, my love,
Wake not to weep, my love,
Though thy sweet eyes are all hidden from me :
Hard 'tis to part without one look of kindness,
Yet sleep more resembles fond love in its blindness,
And thy look would enchain me again ; I find less
Of pain to say, “ Farewell, sweet slumb'rer, to thee ! ”

Thus, in writing and reading,—for De Lacy had a few choice books with him,—some days were passed ; but his strength began to return, and he was soon able to walk abroad. In his rambles, a book was mostly his companion ; and it was the frequency of his being observed by the country people in the act of reading that he obtained the name of “ the

Scholar," for so he became universally called by the peasants, who liked him for his courteous manner, and the freedom with which he conversed with them. Who and what he was, they did not care: but not so little Sweeny and Scrubbs, who used to exchange mutual "wonders" with each other as to "What the deuce he could be?—What brought him there?—What he was about?" &c. &c. and the conclusion they always arrived at was, both shaking their heads very significantly, and saying, "Very odd!" De Lacy avoided the village in his walks. In the first place, the retirement of the quiet banks of the river, or the wildness of the hills above it, were more congenial to his temper; and secondly, he wished to keep himself beyond the range of observation as much as possible. With reading and sketching, and making short excursions into the adjacent country, his days passed pleasantly enough, while all the time he was taking note of what he saw and heard; for though the expected assistance from the Texel, of which

he was in daily hopes of receiving intelligence, rendered it unnecessary to write to General Clarke on the subject, as the blow he expected would be struck without any urgency on his part, yet his own anxiety to acquire a knowledge of the internal state of the country stimulated his inquiries. Old Phelim, the schoolmaster, was often questioned on such matters ; and his oddity amused, while his information satisfied, De Lacy.

It might be supposed by the general reader that, engaged in such a cause as De Lacy then was, an introduction to the parish priest would have been held desirable ; but it was not so—far from it. De Lacy, in common with all the leaders of the political movement then going forward in Ireland, desired to shun by every possible means any contact with the priesthood. The results of the French Revolution had given the alarm to the clergy of all denominations ; and the Irish Roman Catholic priests, so far from countenancing the introduction of revolutionary principles into Ireland, had refused absolution

to “The Defenders,” a political union formed amongst the lower orders of the *Catholic* Irish, to protect themselves from the aggressions of the “Peep-o'-day Boys,” who were *Protestants and Presbyterians*. The dominant party in Ireland have endeavoured to propagate the belief that the rebellion of 1798 was of religious origin, and put in practice for the murder of all the Protestants in Ireland; but what is the fact? The society of United Irishmen was first established in the North of Ireland, where the majority of the population was Protestant and Presbyterian. It was by Protestants and Presbyterians the society was founded, and Protestants and Presbyterians were its principal leaders. So, to credit the Orange account of the affair, we must believe that the Protestants originated the ingenious device of organising a revolution to murder themselves!

The truth is, the revolution then contemplated was *purely political*. When the repeated calls for reform in the Irish parliament and a repeal of the penal laws against Ca-

tholics were refused till disappointment grew into despair, then, and not till then, did the people coalesce to take by force what they had vainly sought by petition. The Catholics, from the very nature of their religion, its feudal character, and its habits of slavish subjection, would never have dared to rebel. It was the stern Presbyterians, reformers by descent, that organised the movement to relieve Ireland from the political degradation in which she then was prostrated, and long oppression at last roused the Roman Catholics to make common cause with them.

These facts I mention, lest it might be considered inconsistent that De Lacy should not have been in league with Father Kinshela, who, so far from countenancing the influence of Frenchmen in Ireland, considered the Gallic revolution and all its emissaries to be quite as pestilential as they were deemed to be by the stanchest Protestant in the land.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN "IRISH" FAIR WITH ONLY "ONE" FIGHT IN IT.—
DE WELSKIN'S METAMORPHOSSES.—LEARNED PIGS.—
ROASTED DUCKS.—LOVE AND MURDER, &c. &c.

DE LACY had been for some days in expectation of going to a neighbouring fair, which has the reputation of being a scene of great merriment in Ireland, and a very characteristic thing; and as he had never witnessed such a meeting, his curiosity was not a little excited. It was agreed that he and Rory, as well as his sister, with her suitor Conolly,—who, by the way, was not a favoured, though a devoted lover,—should form a party, to which Phelim O'Flanagan begged to be added, and the request was granted.

"You must not expect, though," said Rory,

addressing De Lacy, “ that we ’ll have as much fun as usual ; for, you see, the people being more *united*, they won’t fight as much as they do in common, and the factions is laid down by common consint until matthers get smooth again ;—and when we have justice and happiness among us once more, why thin we can enjoy our private battles according to the good owld fashion.”

“ That ’s the thing that surprises me,” said De Lacy,—“ why you are so fond of factions. You are good-humoured and pleasant fellows enough individually ; but when a set of you get together, you scarcely ever part without fighting.”

“ Why, you see, sir,” said Phelim, “ it is the nature of man to be disputaarious in their various degrees,—kings for kingdoms—scholars for argument—and so an ; and the disputaariousness of human nathur is as like to brake out about which barony is the best ball-players or hurlers, as if Roosia vindicated Proosia, or Proosia vindicated Roosia : for you know, sir,

being a scholar, that the vindicativeness of nations to aitch other is no more than the vindicativeness of the human heart, which is as demonstherated in a parish, or a barony, or a townland, or the like, as in the more circumscribed circle of an impire or a principalatine, all as one as a circle is a circle, whatever the size of it may be, from a platther up to a cart-wheel. Q. E. D. What *was* to be demonstherated!" and Phelim took snuff, as usual.

"Admirably demonstrated indeed!" said De Lacy, maintaining his gravity; "but, if the matter in dispute be ball-playing or wrestling, would not the surest method of settling the business be, to play an equal match of either of the given games, instead of beating each other?"

"Arrah, what else do we do?" said Rory.

"You always fight, instead."

"But how can we help that? Sure, we always *do* challenge each other to play a match of ball or hurling, and thin, in the coarse of play, one man gives a false ball, or another

cuts it, and thin there's a dispute about it ; or in hurlin', the same way, in the hate of the game, maybe the fellow before you is jist goin' to have the ball all to himself, and you afther him, hot foot, what can you do but give him a thrip? and away he goes head over heels, and if he's not disabled, there's a chance he loses his timper, and comes to thrip *you*,—when, maybe he is not so necessiated to thrip *you* as *you* wor to thrip *him*, and that doesn't stand to rayson in *your* opinion, and maybe you can't help givin' him a clip o' the hurl, and down *he* goes ; and thin, maybe, one o' *his* barony sees that, and doesn't think it raysonable, and slaps at *you*,—and so on it goes like fire among flax, and the play turns into a fight in no time ; and, indeed, in the long-run we find 'tis the best way of arguin' the point,—for there might be some fractious sperits would dispute about the fairness o' *this* play, or the fairness o' *that* play, and that it was an accident settled the game ; but when it comes to rale fightin', there can be no words about it,—for, you see, when

you dhrive every mother's son o' them before you, and fairly leather them out o' the field, *there can be no mistake about it.*"

"But does not that produce bad blood amongst you?" said De Lacy.

"By no manes," said Rory; "why should it? Sure, haven't they the chance of wollopin' us the next time?"

"And that perpetuates the dispute," said De Lacy.

"To be sure," said Rory; "that's the fun of it. Oh, it would only be a cowardly thing to be always fightin' a party you were sure to bate! — there would be an end of the glory intirely."

"All party," thought De Lacy, "is like Rory's game of hurling; those who are *out* endeavour to trip up those who are *in*, — and, in conclusion, the only game left is to *leather them out of the field*; when there can be no mistake about it."

It was the next day following Rory's and Phelim's eloquent, lucid, and reasonable expo-

sition of the necessity and propriety of party fights, that the fair was holden, and the party, as already named, started for the scene of amusement ; — Conolly having the honor of being gentleman in waiting on Mary O'More, handing her over stiles, &c. ; Phelim and Rory bearing De Lacy company.

On arriving at the scene of action, they found the fair tolerably “ throng,” as the phrase is in Ireland ; and the moment they were well on the ground, Conolly commenced the series of gallantries which every aspirant to a pretty girl’s favour goes through on a fair-day, by buying a large stock of gingerbread cakes, which appeared to have been made of brown paper and treacle, and apples to match, and requesting the whole party, including De Lacy, who was most politely solicited, to partake of the feast. Now, when people are at fairs, it is a point of honour to eat and drink, and see all that you can,—in short, till you can eat, and drink, and see no more ; and all the party present, except De Lacy, seemed determined

their honour should not be called in question. The cake and apple stands were generally formed by the common car of the country being backed into whatever position it could take up on the fair-ground ; and the horse being unyoked, a forked pole of sufficient strength was stuck in the ground, and the backband of the car being deposited between the prongs, it at once obtained support ; after which some *wattles* (long supple boughs) being bent over the vehicle, a quilt was thrown across these rustic rafters, to form an awning, and the cakes and apples were spread on some sacks, perhaps, or something equally coarse,—anything, in short, to cover the bare boards of the car, that probably carried a load of sand or earth, or something not so agreeable, the day before, and was now at once converted into a cake-shop. In one corner of the concern, a glass and a black bottle, with *something in it*, were to be seen ; and under the car, from the middle of a bundle of straw, you might perceive the muzzle of a large jar protruding, whence the black bottle could be replenished as occasion required.

Booths were erected for the accommodation of those who chose to dance, and drink to refresh themselves; and both these amusements,—that is to say, dancing and drinking,—seemed to be the staple commodities of the fair, even at an early hour; but the dancing-tents were not in their full glory till much later in the day.

There was throwing for gingerbread, and other amusements incidental to such scenes; but nothing very stirring in this line seemed as yet to have set in. So the party strolled on through the crowd; Rory remarking to De Lacy as they went, that he told him there would be little or no fun—"And you see how quiet they are," said Rory.

"God save you, Phelim," said a well-dressed peasant.

"God save you kindly," answered Phelim.

"How does the gossoons do without you, Phelim, agra?"

"Oh, I gev the craythurs a holiday," said Phelim. "I don't like to be too hard on

them. Exercise is good for the gossoons when they are at college, for larnin' lies heavy on the stomach."

" Thru for you, Phelim. Not that I know much about larnin'; but I know you mustn't brake the heart of a young cowlt."

And so saying, off Phelim's friend went.

They now approached a portion of the fair where sales of cattle were going forward.

" How is the bastes goin'?" said Rory to a farmer.

" Indeed, it's back they'll be goin'," said the farmer: " there's no prices at all here—that is, for bastes; but I hear pigs is lively."

" What's thim I see up on the hill?" said Rory. " Is it sogers?"

" No less," said the farmer; " though, indeed, they might save themselves the throuble,—they kem here to watch us; but there won't be a blow sthruick to-day."

" Thru for you," said Rory; and so they parted.

They next approached a show-box, where an

exhibition of Punch and Judy seemed to give great amusement. That interesting domestic history was about half-way through when our hero and his party arrived ; and Rory had been telling in a hasty manner to Mary the nature of Punch's adventures, as they approached. " Make haste, now," said Rory, " for it 's betther nor a play. I seen a play when I was in Dublin ; but Punch and Judy is worth two of it. Run ! run ! there he is goin' to kill his wife and child, the comical owld black-guard !"

They arrived in time to witness the death of Mrs. Punch and the child, and then the doctor was sent for. The doctor made his appearance ; and Punch, after his legitimate squeak, began,

" Docta-w-r !"

" Sare ?" said the doctor.

" Can you cure my wife ?"

" Yes, sare."

" What will you give her ?"

" Some *ghost's* milk."

Rory started. "By all that's good, that's himself!" said he.

"Why, is it a rale docthor?" said Mary.

"No, no," said Rory. "I was only ——" he paused, and withdrawing from Mary, he beckoned De Lacy from the group, and said, "That's Mr. Devilskin that's there," pointing to the show-box.

"Where?" said De Lacy.

"There," said Rory, pointing again; "inside the show-box. I'd take my oath it's him. I thought I knew his voice at first; but I'd sware to the *ghost's milk*."

And so it was De Welskein. It has been said he was fond of intrigue and adventure, and he was quite in his element in thus masquerading it through the country; and while he was sowing rebellion from his love of revolution, and reaping profit from his tobacco, it was pride and glory to him to be playing the buffoon at the same time, which was at once a source of pleasure and security; for the smuggler was never long in one spot, but changing to different places in different characters.

"I want to see him," said De Lacy, "and am glad of this chance-meeting. We must watch an opportunity to speak to him when the show is over."

While they were waiting for this, a group of horsemen approached the show, and Rory amongst them saw Squire Ransford, the parson, Sweeny, and Scrubbs; the latter engaged in conversation with "the colonel"—he who had given Rory his freedom and his pass. Rory saw there was nothing for it but to retreat, as, if he were seen, his whole finesse about Mrs. Scrubbs would be blown, he would get into trouble, and his name be in the colonel's possession, who, it will be remembered, had never, in his hurry to dismiss our hero, asked who he was. Therefore, screening himself behind De Lacy, he told him how matters stood, and taking Mary and Conolly with him, he left De Lacy with Phelim for a guide.—"If we don't meet again in the fair," said Rory, we must only wait till we go home;" and he retired rapidly from the spot unobserved by the horse-

men who had caused his sudden retreat. Appointing then a place of rendezvous with Mary and Conolly, Rory left them, and they returned to witness the finale of Punch and Judy.

Rory pushed his way through the principal row of booths, where the dancing and drinking were going on prosperously, and entering that under whose sign his appointed meeting with his sister and her cavalier was to take place, he sat down, and calling for a small portion of drink, he refreshed himself, intending when that was over to *rest* himself with dancing. While he sat, he perceived Regan and Kathleen enter at the farther end of the booth, and his heart bounded at the sight of the girl he loved ; but his joy was damped at the thought that in her brother's presence he had better not approach her. To his unspeakable joy, however, he saw Regan depart, leaving Kathleen, after speaking a few words to her ; and when he was some seconds gone, Rory moved towards the girl of his heart gaily, and, as her head was turned away, he proposed surprising her by his

presence ; so approaching unobserved, he tapped her smartly on the shoulder, and had his most winning smile ready to meet her when she should turn. When she did turn, instead of the flush of joy which Rory anticipated, a deadly paleness and a look of reserve were on the countenance of Kathleen, and Rory's blood ran cold to his heart.

" What 's the matther, Kathleen dear ?" said Rory.

Kathleen could not answer.

" What *is* the matther !—for God's sake, tell me !" said Rory impressively, for he saw by the girl's manner that an unfavourable impression had been made upon her as regarded him.

" Rory," said Kathleen with that reproachful tone which an offended woman only can assume,—“ Rory,” said she, “ need you ask me ?”

“ What have I done, Kathleen jewel ?”

“ Oh, Rory ! so soon to desaive and think light o' me !”

“ Me, Kathleen !—by all that 's good——”

" Whisht, Rory—whisht !—swaring won't make it betther."

" But what is it, Kathleen ?"

" Oh, Rory ! don't be so desaitful. You know you 've wronged me !"

" By this blessed light ! I never wronged you, Kathleen !"

There was something bearing such inherent evidence of sincerity in Rory's manner, that Kathleen hesitated for a moment, and looked inquiringly into his face ; but suddenly withdrawing her eyes and dropping her voice, she said, " I 'd willingly b'lieve you, Rory,—but—"

" But what ?" said Rory.

" I don't like to accuse you, but you know—" again she paused.

" What ?" said Rory impatiently.

" The cellar," said Kathleen.

The word was enough. With all that magic rapidity of thought which instantaneously links a chain of circumstances together, Rory saw that his conduct in De Welskein's cellar had

been misrepresented ; and when he remembered how the girl he had danced with had fastened herself upon him, he could not but see that circumstances might be made to bear hard against him in the opinion of the woman he was courting—he was silenced by Kathleen's one word—and she mistaking his silence for guilt, was rising to leave the booth, when Rory, taking her hand and pressing it closely, said,

“ Kathleen, you wrong me; I know what you mane, but—”

“ Let go *my* hand,” said Kathleen. “ You had betther look for the hand of the *lady* you like so much; I b'lieve you can find her in the fair;” and she again made an effort to go, but Rory still detained her.

“ Kathleen,” said he, “ it is only Shan Dhu could tell you this, and I did not think he had so black a heart; for, by this light——”

“ Whisht !” said Kathleen in terror, “ lave me, lave me; Shan is coming back — I see him.”

" Well, promise to meet me till I clear myself to you."

" Rory, don't be sthriving to desaive a poor girl—go, I tell you."

" I won't go, unless you promise."

" If you 've any pity for me, go ; Shan is close by."

" Promise !" said Rory impressively.

" I will, then," said Kathleen faintly.

" Meet me by the rath, near the bridge," said Rory, " to-morrow evening. God bless you, Kathleen, and never b'lieve I have the heart base enough to wrong you !"

So saying, he kissed her hand passionately before she could withdraw it, and slipping out through an opening in the side of the booth, he left it without being perceived by Regan. Poor Rory was heart-sick at the thought of Kathleen's coldness, and he looked forward with the impatience and longing of a child for the morrow's evening, which he hoped would serve to chase every doubt from her mind. While he was moving through the crowd,

his attention was attracted by a party of mummers, who were parading up and down on a platform, in dirty rags sprinkled with rusty spangles, and amongst them he recognised the girl that had been so sweet on him in the cellar; he then remembered Kathleen's saying, "I b'lieve you can find her in the fair," and the thought struck him that Regan might have even pointed out the flourishing damsel before him as his paramour, and Rory's shame was increased, for, with her ruddled cheeks, short petticoats, and shabby finery, she was a most disgusting object, though rather a fine girl. While Rory looked at her, he fancied he caught her eye; and its brazen glare was for a moment darkened by a demoniac expression, and instantly withdrawn. He wished more and more for the evening of the morrow. On he went through the main chain of tents, but seeing the squire and colonel approaching again, he took a short turn round one of the booths and avoided them; and making a detour, he

returned to the place where he had appointed Mary and Conolly to meet him, and there he found them waiting. Joining company, they commenced another ramble through the fair, and at length reached a booth whence there proceeded much laughter, and at the door of which, a bespangled buffoon was inviting the people to enter and see the wonderful conjuror who could tell fortunes on cards and cure all sorts of diseases. This promised much diversion, and the laughter continuing to appeal to the curiosity of those outside, a fresh party, including our hero, his sister and her admirer, entered. Here they saw a man in a bag-wig and cocked-hat, laced coat and ruffles, performing various sleight-of-hand tricks with cards, and other feats of legerdemain ; and after making his beholders' eyes the size of saucers with wonder, and their mouths of equal capacity, he proceeded to offer for sale various nostrums for the cure of diseases ; amongst others, he produced one which he protested most solemnly was superior to *ghost's milk*.

" Devilskin again!" said Rory to himself; " devilskin, sure enough!—more than the skin, by my sowl, for I think he's the d—l himself!"

Here was another metamorphose of the Frenchman. He was in his glory: he had a stall in the fair, in good hands, for the sale of tobacco, and he was masquerading it and making money in another quarter; a French agent in the middle of the fair, where the army were lookers-on to see that no mischief was going forward;—this was his glory, the intrigue and romance delighted him.

Rory left the booth—he did not wish to meet De Welskein's eye: not that he feared him—he could not tell very well himself the precise cause of his dislike to be recognised by the smuggler; but there was an undefined feeling about Rory, that rather shrunk from having anything to do with one who seemed invested with mysterious power.

He awaited outside the booth the egress of his sister and Conolly, who suggested that

it was time to get something for dinner. To this Rory assented ; for, notwithstanding that his meeting with Kathleen had damped his enjoyment, his appetite was of too keen and hale a nature to be influenced by a frown from his mistress, as those of more refined lovers are said to be.

“ Not that I’m very hungry,” said Rory.

“ ’Faith, then I am,” said Conolly ; “ for exceptin’ five or six dozen o’ gingerbread and a score of apples or so, between us, Mary and I have not tasted anything to signify.”

“ You were drinking my health very often, too,” said Mary.

“ Phoo,—what signifies three or four quarts o’ porther !”

While we leave this hungry party looking for their dinner, let us return to De Lacy and Phelim, whom we left opposite De Welskein’s show-box.

De Lacy took his opportunity of speaking to the smuggler, whom he followed by signal to a booth ; and leaving Phelim standing outside

by De Welskein's desire, he entered the booth, and a rude curtain was drawn across the orifice by which they came in. De Lacy now found himself in a small canvass apartment, from which, through the division in another curtain, he saw into a large space beyond the sentry-box sort of place in which he stood.

"Dis my theatre," said De Welskein.

"What do you want a theatre for?"

"To 'muse myself—blind de vulgare—mak romauunce—*J'aime les aventures, vous savez, monsieur.*"

"I thought, smuggling—"

"Sare!" said De Welskein with dignity.

"I mean, your mercantile pursuits would have given you enough of employment."

"Bah!—bagatelle!—everboddée can be marchand;—bote for *les intrigues*—"

"That requires a man of genius," said De Lacy.

"Ah!—b'leeve so, indeet," said De Welskein with great self-complacency.

"But then your political mission, is not that

enough to fill up any spare time you can withhold from your mercantile pursuits?"

"Yais — *c'est vrai* — *ordinairement* — for most peepel; — but me — love *intrigue* — ro-maunce--ha ! ha !—besise—more hard for discover to *certen persun*. Dis day, marchand—to-mawrow, Ponshe an' Joodee—now me shange agen."

Here he threw off his coat, and proceeded to take out of a canvass bag that lay under some straw in a corner, the laced coat and cocked-hat, wig, &c. in which Rory subsequently saw him attired.

"Now, me go play Doctair Duck."

"What character is that?" said De Lacy.

"Quaak, quaak, quaak," said De Welskein, with a spirit and vivacious expression worthy of the comedy for which his country is so famous.

De Lacy laughed. — "And do you get fees?"

"Certanlee:—no fee, no docteur; sell leetle peels—cure everyting—better dan *ghost's milk*.

Besise," said he, pulling cards from his pocket, "here more ting—hocus-pocus—poots card in fool's pauket—ha ! ha !—mak dem stare—tink me de devil."

"They're not far out," thought De Lacy.

De Welskein having completed his attire, painted his face, rubbed burnt cork on his eyebrows, and shaken flour into his wig, held some short conversation on the state of affairs over the water ; and De Lacy, thinking it better not to remain too long in such company, brought his conference to a close as soon as possible ; and after telling De Welskein where he could find him, he drew the ragged curtain, and emerged from the tiring-room of the adventurer. Having rejoined Phelim, he asked him what was to be done next, for he determined to let Phelim do the honours of the fair.

"I hear there is a pig in the fair, sir," said the cicerone.

"I've seen some hundreds already," said De Lacy.

"Oh, you're very smart on me now," said

Phelim, "and take me up short ; but the pig I mane is a larned pig."

"Indeed ! where is he to be seen ?"

"Somewhere up here, I hear. Now I'd like to see that above all things ; for though I know to my cost that some childhre is no betther than pigs, either in manners nor intellex, I have yet to be *insensed* how a pig can be equal to a Chrishtan."

They soon came within hearing of a fellow who was roaring at the top of his voice,—

"Walk in ! walk in ! walk in, ladies and gintlemin ; here is the wondherful larned pig that knows the five quarthers o' the world, and more ;—together with his A. B. C. and apperceeand—and goes through his alphibbit backwars ;—together with addishin, substhracshin, multiplicashin, and divishin ;—knows numerashin, minshurashin, navigashin, and botherashin —"

Here the crowd always laughed.

— "Together with varrious accomplish-

mints too numerous to be minshind,—smokes tabakky and tells cunnundherums."

"Oh! do you hear the lies he's tellin'!" said Phelim; "sure no pig could do the like, barring one pig that is minshind in anshint histhery."

"I don't remember that pig, Phelim," said De Lacy.

"Pig—maylius!" said Phelim, bursting in triumph at having caught De Lacy in one of his old and favourite jokes.

De Lacy could not help laughing at the poor old man's whimsical conceit; and complimenting him on his wit, he proposed to Phelim that they should see if what was promised of the pig were true.

"Impossible!" said Phelim; "it's only throwing away money."

"We'll see, at all events," said De Lacy, who paying sixpence, which was twopence more than was required for two admissions, he and the schoolmaster walked up a low step-ladder,

which led to the place of exhibition, deafened, as they passed the crier, by his vociferating, “Step up, ladies!—jist goin’ to begin. Step up, step up—all for tuppince—only tuppince; the larned pig, only tuppince for minsurashin, miditashin, contimplashin, navigashin, and *baw-therashin!*”

When the company had been collected in sufficient quantity, a shrewd-looking fellow, fantastically dressed, led in a pig by a string which was fastened to a ring in the animal’s nose.

The pig ascended a circular platform, in the middle of which a pole was placed, and round the circle were several holes cut.

“Now, ladies and gintlemin,” said the showman, “this is the larned pig, that is perfect masther of varrious branches of idicashin; and first and foremost, he will show you his knowledge of the five quarthers o’ the world, aiquid to Captain Cook that purformed the circumlocution of the globe. Excuse me, ladies, till I give him his instrucshins.”

Here he put his mouth to the pig's ear, and the pig grunted.

"He says he is happy to have the honour of your company, ladies."

Here the showman was encouraged by a laugh from the spectators, who, all being willing to be pleased, laughed at a trifle.

"What did he say to him, do you think?" said Phelim to De Lacy confidentially.

"I suppose he gave him a pig's whisper," said De Lacy.

"Good, sir, good," said Phelim; "by dad! you're always ready—a pig's whisper!—well, I'll never forget that!"

The showman now laid four pieces of card, with the names of the four quarters of the world written upon them, over four holes on the opposite parts of the circle, and said,

"Now, ladies, which o' the five quarthers o' the world shall this wondherful scholar show you?—Europe, Asia, Afrikay, or Amerikay?"

"Amerikay, if you plaze, sir," said a woman,

who blushed excessively at hearing the sound of her own voice in public.

“ Sartinly, ma’am. Show the lady Amerikay, sir.”

The animal now got a pull of the string, and he began poking his nose round the circle, and at last stopped at the quarter named, and shoved the card from over the hole.

Great applause followed, and the showman rewarded the pig by giving him an acorn. De Lacy saw at once how the trick was done ; but to Phelim’s question of “ Arrah, how did he do that ?” he made no reply for the present.

The showman was about to remove the cards, when Phelim interrupted him :

“ You said, sir, you ’d show the five quarthers o’ the world by manes o’ your pig ; and indeed if he knows five quarthers, it ’s more than I know.”

“ To be sure he knows more than you know,” said the showman.

A burst of merriment followed this hit ; for many of the spectators knew Phelim, and that a pig should be said to know more than he did,

delighted them. When the laugh subsided Phelim continued :

“ Maybe you don’t know, my good fellow, that you are addhressing a philomath ?”

“ A what ?”

“ A philomath, sir.”

The showman now turned to the pig, and putting his mouth to his ear, as before, said,

“ Can you tell me what is a filly-mat ?”

The pig grunted again.

“ He says, a filly-mat is a grumblin’ owld fellow.”

Another laugh against Phelim succeeded the showman’s buffoonery, whose practised effrontery was too much for Phelim. Phelim, however, was too used to triumph to give in so easily, particularly in the presence of so many who knew him ; and rallying once more, he said,

“ Well, if there *is* a fifth quarther o’ the world, will you be so good to tell the *other brute* there to show it.”

Phelim had the laugh on his side now. A laugh is a main point of argument with Paddy ;

and whoever has the last laugh, has the best of the battle in Ireland.

The showman waited till the laugh was lulled, and then addressing the pig, he said,

“ Will you tell that ignorant owld fill-pot what the fifth quarther of the world is ? ”

The pig commenced rubbing himself against the upright stick that stood in the middle of the circle, much to the merriment of the crowd.

“ There ! ” said the showman triumphantly.

“ Is that what you call answerin’ the problem I have propounded ? ” said Phelim, who thought he had vanquished his man, and got magniloquent in consequence. “ I prepound to yiz all— — ”

“ If you were poundin’ from this till tomorrow, you’re nothing but a *bosthoon*, ” said the showman.

Phelim absolutely staggered at the degrading epithet of *bosthoon* being applied to a *philomath*. The showman continued :

“ Sure, if you worn’t an owld bogie, you’d see that the pig was pointin’ out to you the fifth quarther o’ the world ; but the fact is, *you*

don't know that there is sitch a thing as the fifth quarther ; but," said he, making a flourishing appeal to his audience, " ladies and gintlemen, you see the baste has pointed out to your comprehinshin the fifth quarther of the terrestorial globe, which is the North Pole !"

Phelim uttered an indignant " Oh !" but his exclamation was drowned in the vociferous plaudits of the multitude.

" Lave the place ! lave the place !" said Phelim to De Lacy, bursting with rage : but De Lacy did not like to lose the fun, and thought Phelim more diverting than the pig.

" Stay," said De Lacy ; " you 'll expose his ignorance yet."

Thus tempted, Phelim remained, maintaining a sulky silence, and watching for an opportunity of annihilating the pig and the showman.

The fellow put his pig through some alphabetical manœuvres upon the same principle that the quarters of the globe had been pointed out, though the trick was unperceived by the spectators, who still continued to be delighted.

"Now, ladies and gintlemen," said the proprietor of the pig, "this divartin' baste will go through his alphabit backwars."

"Maybe he could say the Lord's prayer backwards?" said Phelim, wishing to be severe.

"That would rise the d—l, as every fool knows," said the showman, "and that would not be agreeable to the company; otherwise he could do it aisy."

"Hurrup, Solomon!" continued he, addressing the pig;—" (He is called Solomon, ladies; he is so wise;) go through your alphabit backwars."

Upon this the pig made a retrograde movement round the circle, the showman exclaiming when he had finished, "That's doin' it backwars, I think!"

The people were tickled with the quibble; but Phelim said,

"That's only a *thrick*."

"Well, it's *my thrick*, anyhow," said the showman with readiness. "You haven't won a thrick yet."

Phelim was floored again.

By a similar quibble, the animal went through his multiplication table. A board, with a multiplication table upon it, had a swinging door hung in the middle ; and this being placed before the pig, he walked through it.

Some of the spectators asked to see the pig “smoke tobakky,” as one of the things promised.

“He would with pleasure, ladies, but he bruk his pipe in the last exhibishin, and there is not one convaynient,” was the answer ; “but, what is much more curious, he will answer cunnundherums. Tell me, sir,” said he, addressing the pig, “what does the ladies say when they are angry with their husbands ?”

The pig grunted furiously.

This was the triumph of the day : the men laughed outrageously, and even the women could not help joining ; and a jolly-looking fellow in front cried out,

“By the powers, Molly, that's as like you as two pays !”

Another shout followed this sally.

"Now, sir," said the showman, "what does the girls say when the boys is coaxin' them?"

The pig gave a prolonged squeel.

It was now the young men's turn to laugh, and many a pinched elbow of a pretty girl, at the moment, caused a chorus to the pig's squeel. This was the finale; the pig retired amidst the plaudits of "an admiring audience," who made their exit down the step-ladder, to give place to others who were waiting to go up.

Phelim was silent for some time after he left the booth, but at last broke out with, "That fellow's a humbugger!"

"That's his business," said De Lacy, "and therefore you can't give him higher praise than to say he *is* a humbugger."

"And is that what you call praise?" said Phelim in offended wonder, for he thought De Lacy would have sided with his wounded dignity.

"Certainly," said De Lacy. "Every man to his calling."

"But is it respectable to be humbuggin' people?"

"Oh, that's quite another question, Phelim; I'll say nothing for the respectability; but didn't you perceive the trick by which he makes the pig point out any letter or part of the world he's desired?"

"Not I—how could I?"

"Well, I'll tell you. You perceived there were holes cut round the circular platform, and that a card was always laid over a hole?"

"Yis, I did," said Phelim.

"Well, you perceived also, that whenever the pig did a trick effectively, his master gave him an acorn?"

"He gave him something, but I didn't know it was an acorn."

"You know this is the time of their falling, and there is nothing of which pigs are so fond."

"And do you mane to say, sir, that if you feed a pig on acorns, you'll tache him to spell, and larn him jography?"

"No," said De Lacy, smiling: "but I mean, that an acorn was the pig's reward; but he would not have got the reward if he had not *found out the acorns*. Do you see the trick now?"

"Why, thin, indeed, to say the thruth, I only persaive it afther a manner like—that is, not compleate."

"Well, I'll show it to you *complate*, then," said De Lacy, who enjoyed the hesitation that Phelim evinced to acknowledge that the showman's trick was beyond him.

"You saw every card was placed over a hole?"

"Yis."

"And that when the pig came to the right card, he began to poke it with his snout?"

"Yis."

"And can't you guess why?"

"No."

"It was, because his master had a plate of acorns attached to a stick, which he always

placed under the hole the card was over ; and so the pig went smelling round the circle till he came to the acorns.”

“ Tare an’ oun’s ! what a chate !” said Phelim.

“ If the pig made a mistake, he got no acorn ; when he found out the right hole, he was rewarded.”

“ Oh, the vagabone ! to make the people think that a pig could be taught to know his lettters, and jography, and, afther all, it’s only the *nathur* of the brute baste is in it !”

“ And did you expect any more ?”

“ To be sure I did,” said the poor simple Phelim ; “ and, what’s worse, the people will b’lieve it, and they ’ll say *I* can’t do as much with a Chrishtan child as that vagabone can with a pig. Why, it’s enough to ruin all the schoolmasthers in Ireland ! I ’ll go back and expose the villian.”

“ No, no, Phelim, you wouldn’t do that !”

“ Why wouldn’t *I* ? isn’t it a common forgery on people’s undherstan’in’s ?” And De Lacy

was obliged to lay his hand on the indignant philomath's arm to restrain him.

"Phelim," said De Lacy, "you don't know but that poor fellow has a wife and children to support; and if his humbugging, as you call it, is turned into bread and milk for his little ones, you wouldn't be the cause of making them feel hunger?"

"God forbid, sir!" said Phelim feelingly, his pride giving place to his humanity. "Bread and milk, indeed! Oh, thin, if it's but potatoes and salt he can airn in such a good cause, may the Lord prosper him!"

It is time to return to Rory and *his* party, whom we left looking for their dinner. But to obtain this, they found no such easy matter. They inquired at various booths without success, for the day was further spent than they imagined, and the viands consumed.

Rory had been so absorbed between anxiety on account of Kathleen, and wonder at De Welskeins' Protean powers, that the day had

passed over without his being conscious of it ; and the various shows kept the attention of Conolly and Mary so much on the stretch, that they were equally unmindful of the flight of time, and, as Mary herself said, “ ‘Faith, the day went over like an hour, a’most.’ ”

They sought the long entrenchment of sunken fires over which pots full of beef and cabbage had been “ *busy bilin’* ” when last they passed that way. The fires were there, ’tis true, and so were the pots, but no beef and cabbage : the solids had been demolished, and the huge iron pots had given place to kettles, where water was “ *kept continually bilin’* ” for the manufacture of punch. What was to be done ? At this hour dinner was manifestly a scarce thing, and this fact increased their appetites ; and even Rory himself, in spite of love and Kathleen, began to feel the inward man making appeals to his common sense. While things were in this state, Rory saw a brace of ducks dangling from a string, roasting before a fire at the end of one of the booths, and a girl very busy in attending the culinary process. Rory’s

invention was immediately at work ; and his love of fun, joined to his desire for dinner, at once suggested the notion of his making himself master of the ducks.

So, desiring Conolly and his sister to secure a seat as near as they could to where the birds were in preparation, he spoke to the landlady of the booth, and asked could they have dinner. She said they had nothing but a little cold beef.

“ Well, that same,” said Rory.

So plates were laid, and knives and forks provided, and the half-warm and ragged remains of some very bad beef was placed before Rory and his party.

“ That 'll do,” said Rory, who, having thus contrived to get the plates, &c. set about securing the ducks. So, feigning an excuse, he said to his party, “ Don't begin till Jack comes to us ; he 'll be here by-an'-by :” and then turning to the girl who was cooking the ducks, he kept up a conversation with her, and made her laugh so often, that he got into her good

graces, and she fancied him the pleasantest fellow in the world. At last, Rory, when he thought the birds were nearly done, said to her, seeing that her face was very dewy from her occupation,

“I b’lieve it’s roasting thim ducks you are?”

“ ’Faith, it’s thim that’s roastin’ me, you mane,” said the girl.

“ It’s dhry work, I’m thinkin’,” said Rory.

“ Thru for you,” said the girl, “ and no one to offer me a dhrink.”

“ Suppose I’d give you a dhrink ?” said Rory.

“ Long life to you !” said the girl, looking up at him, and wiping down her face with a back stroke of her red hand.

“ Well, you must do something for me,” said Rory, “ and I’ll give you a pot o’ porther.”

“ God bless you !” said the girl.

“ Jist run down, thin, to Tim Donoghue’s stan’in’,—it’s at the far end o’ the sthreet,—and get me a ha’p’orth o’ snuff, for I’m lost

with a cowld in my head that I got through a hole in my hat."

"Go 'long wid you!" said the girl, giving the ducks a twirl.

"It's thruth I'm tellin' you," said Rory.

"Oh! I darn't lave the ducks," said she.

"Oh!" said Rory in an insinuating tone, "jist slip out here through the slit in the tint, and I'll take charge o' them till you come back. Here's a hog for you,—and you may keep the change for yourself."

The "hog" was too much for the girl's prudence: off she started to Tim Donoughue's; and she wasn't ten steps from the place, when Rory had the pair of ducks on the dish before his party, and, as Rory himself said in telling the story after, "the sorrow long they wor in making jommethry of the same ducks."

When the girl came back and saw the skeletons of the birds she had left in tempting plumpness before the fire, she, in the language of Conolly, "screeched a thousand murdhers, and riz the tint."

"Oh! the ducks, the ducks!" cried the girl.

"Oh! you baggage, are they spylte?" said Mrs. Molloy, the landlady, rushing to the spot on hearing the uproar.

"No, indeed, ma'am," said Rory very quietly, picking the bones of one of them at the same time; "they are not spylte, for they wor as fine ducks as ever I put a tooth in."

"Oh, God be good to me!" said the woman, with a look of despair; "is it ating Mr. Regan's wild ducks you are?"

Now this "took Rory aback," as sailors say. He would rather that he had not hit upon Regan's ducks for his frolic: but, as chance had so ruled it, he determined to follow up his joke; so he answered,

"In throth, ma'am, I didn't know whose ducks they wor; and as for their being *wild*, I never found it out; and, 'pon my conscience, I think they are a'most as good as if they wor tame."

"But they wor Mr. Regan's ducks!"

"I didn't know that, ma'am: I supposed they

wor yours ; and when I kem to your tint for enthertainment, I thought I had a right to whatever ateables was in it, as well as another."

" Oh ! what 'll Mr. Regan say ?"

" He 'll say what he has to say for himself," said Regan, who, on hearing that *his* ducks had been taken by Rory O'More, became exceedingly wroth, and swaggered up to the scene of action. On his arrival *there*, he saw Conolly sitting beside Mary O'More, and this, as Rory said when speaking of the affair after, " roused the devil in him ;" so, changing his attack, which was intended for Rory, upon Conolly, he said, addressing the latter in a menacing tone,

" How dar you take *my* ducks ?"

Conolly was in the act of rising, when Rory laid his hand on his shoulder, and said, " Sit down—this is no affair of yours."

In doing this, Rory was actuated by a double motive. In the first place, had the quarrel been established between Conolly and

Regan, he knew that his sister's name would be mixed up with it, and his intuitive sense of delicacy recoiled at the thought of Mary's name being connected with a brawl at a fair; secondly, in point of fact he was the person who had committed the act complained of—and Rory was not the man to let another fight his battle. So, turning to Regan, he said,

"It was I tuk the ducks, Shan—Conolly had nothing to do with it; and if I have disappointed you of your dinner, I'm sorry for it,—and I hope that's satisfaction enough. And for you, Mrs. Molloy, I beg your pardon if I tuk what I had no right to, and all I can do is to pay you for the ducks." And he offered her his hand full of silver to take the price from.

"Take your money out o' that!" said Regan fiercely, accompanying the words with a shove that scattered Rory's shillings over the table and the ground. "The ducks were not Mrs. Molloy's ducks, but mine, and I don't want to be paid for what I didn't intend to

sell ;—and all I 've to say is, that I recommend you not to make away with anything belonging to me for the future."

There was an emphasis on "*belonging to me*" that Rory felt was meant to allude to Kathleen ; but that was not so offensive as the phrase "*make away*,"—which being a common form of parlance in Ireland for anything that is illegally taken, roused Rory's indignation."

"Regan," said he, "what I did, I did in a joke ; and I have said in good temper, and with a hope of making friends, all that ought to satisfy a man that *wished* to be a friend ; and if afther that you *wish* to make a quarrel of it, and *mane* to throw an affront on me, I tell you, Regan, it's what I won't take from you."

"I wish you had been as particular about my ducks," said Regan, walking off.

"If I tuk your ducks, Regan, I won't take your impidince," said Rory, disengaging himself from behind the table.

Mary attempted to stop him, but Conolly

prevented her, knowing the fatal consequences of a man being hampered with a woman in a fray. "The best thing you can do," said he, "is to lave his hands loose, for he 'll have need o' them soon." Then handing over Mary to the care of an elderly man, he said, "Jist take care o' the colleen while I see fair play ;" and he was at Rory's side in an instant.

There was no time to spare, for Regan turned round at Rory's last word and said,

"Did you say *impidince* to me?"

"I did," said Rory.

The words were no sooner uttered than Regan made a tremendous blow at him; but rage and liquor (for he had been drinking) had deprived him of his usual power in such matters, and Rory easily warded his blow, and returned one so well planted, that Regan measured his length on the floor of the booth.

He rose again, and two or three of his cronies rallied round him, while Conolly and the lovers of fair play saw that nothing foul should befall Rory.

From the fury and intoxication of Regan, the fight was a short one. After his first fall, Rory requested that his opponent's friends would "take him away, as he wasn't fit to fight;" but this only increased Regan's rage, and he rushed again upon his man. But it was an easy conquest for Rory, though Regan was superior in years and strength ; and the end of the affair was, as Conolly and Rory's friends spread far and wide over the country in relating the affair, "That Rory O'More gave Regan the length and breadth of as fine a licking as ever he got in his life."

CHAPTER XVII.

A MOONLIGHT MEETING ; WITH ONE TOO MANY.

FROM the presence of the military at the fair, and the existence of the curfew-law at the period, it became doubly necessary that the people assembled should disperse in good time, and take their homeward way.

De Lacy particularly felt the necessity of this, for, circumstanced as he was, to have put himself within reach of military-law would have been madness ; so he and Phelim left the fair much earlier than Rory and his party, for the “small scrimmage” after dinner had occasioned some delay. It is not immediately

after a man has “settled the hash” of his enemy, that he can coolly take up his hat, (that is, if he has the good luck not to have lost it in the fight,) and pay his tavern bill and depart in peace. The decencies of social life must be observed: he must adjust his ruffled attire, sit down to show his presence of mind, and take a drink to quench his thirst — for fighting is thirsty work. Then, as in the case of Rory, one must not be so uncivil as to turn one’s back on the congratulations of one’s friends; and there were many who congratulated Rory, for Regan was a quarrelsome fellow, and, what in fighting parlance, is called a “troublesome customer;” and such a man to get a thrashing where it was least expected, excited great satisfaction, and numerous were the shakings of hands, slaps on the shoulder, and exclamations of admiration, that Rory had bestowed upon him, and several fresh tumblers were called for to drink “his health, *and more power to his elbow.*”

“Long life to you, your sowl!” was said

to him on all sides—"Musha health and power to you, Rory, my boy! but you done the thing compleat. Divil a purtier bit o' fight mysef seen this many a day. Och! but you have the owld blood o' the O'Mores in you, *ma bouchal!*"

When he could escape from these congratulations, Rory, with his sister and Conolly, made the best of their way home. There was not much said on the way: Mary saw that jealousy on Regan's part had been the real cause of his savage conduct, and therefore she, with a woman's tact, wished the subject of the quarrel to be as little discussed as possible. This partly influenced Rory, too; but with him there was a more powerful cause of silence. The events of the day one by one were recalled to his memory; and when he remembered all that had passed between him and Kathleen, he more and more regretted his fight with her brother, and feared it might prove an additional obstacle to the course of his "true love," which did not seem to be a bit more likely to

run smoother than it was wont to do in Shakspeare's days ; and so he trudged on in silence, anticipating the appointed meeting of the morrow, and thinking all he should say to his Kathleen to assure her of his truth.

Conolly guessed the cause of Mary's silence on the subject of Regan's misdemeanour, and he had too much wit about him not to know that the expression of triumph at the defeat of a rival in the hearing of the woman for whom the rivalry existed would only lower him in her opinion.

Thus, the concluding event of the preceding chapter, though it occupied the mind of each, yet, from the causes assigned, all, by common consent forbore to speak of it : therefore, as the predominant impression on their minds was one that might not be manifested in words, they pursued their way in comparative silence.

The moon was rising when they reached the end of the boreen that led to O'More's cottage, and there Conolly parted company. When

he was gone, Rory told Mary to say nothing to his mother about the fight. “ ‘Twould only trouble her,” said he, “ and there would be no use in it. Indeed, we won’t spake of it at home at all—even to Mr. De Lacy.”

“ I’d rather myself it was so,” said Mary; “ but, Rory dear, won’t the mother see the marks on you, and suspect?”

“ Oh! I’ve no marks on me that she can know of: the sulky thief never put the sign of his fist on my face.”

“ Oh! but I’m glad o’ that, Rory dear,” said Mary; “ for it looks so ugly and disrepectable to have the marks of fighting on a man’s face.”

“ Well, sure I couldn’t help it if I had itself. You know, Mary, ’twasn’t my fault.”

“ No, in throth, Rory; and sure my heart sunk within me when I seen you stand up, for I dhreaded that horrid fellow was more than your match; and sure ’twas brave and bowld o’ you, Rory, *ma chree*, to put yourself forninst him.”

"I'm not afraid of him, the best day he ever stept," said Rory; "but as for to-day, he was too full o' dhrink to give me any throuble, and it wint agin my heart to sthreck a man that was in liquor, only you seen yourself he *would* have it."

"Throth, Rory, you've nothing to blame yourself with," said Mary; "you showed the hoighth o' good temper."

Having reached the house, their conversation ended. They found De Lacy and Phelim at supper, which Rory and Mary helped to finish; and after a desultory conversation about the "humours of the fair" to give the widow some idea of their day's amusement, they separated for the night.

It was a night of repose to all under the widow's roof except Rory. The excitement of the day, and his anxious anticipation of the morrow, banished slumber, and he rose at an early hour the following morning, unrefreshed and feverish. He appealed to that unfailing friend of a hot head,—namely, spring water,—

and by a plentiful deluge from the well, he made himself as comfortable as he could during the day, that to him seemed interminable. At length evening arrived, and Rory hastened to the appointed place, where he hoped to meet Kathleen, and clear himself from the charges which had been made against him.

The place he named for their rendezvous was a rath, that stood near a bridge which crossed the river about half-way between their respective residences. Rath is the name given in Ireland to certain large circular mounds of earth, by some called Danish forts. That they were intended for purposes of defence, there is no doubt; but they are more likely the works of the ancient Irish than the Danes.

The rath which Rory named stood near the bank of the river, and probably was intended to defend the passage of the stream, which in later days had been traversed by a bridge of low small arches, such as remain in great numbers in Ireland to this day, and present specimens of early architecture more curious, per-

haps, than anything else in the same way remaining in Europe. To the inexperienced stranger it would appear that a great deal of masonry had been thrown away on the bridge in question, for there were many arches which were quite dry at some seasons; but by those who know how rapidly the streams in the vicinity of hills expand after heavy rains, the knowledge of our forefathers in thus providing against such an exigency can be appreciated.

Rory arrived at the place of appointment earlier than Kathleen, of course;—there needs no master of the ceremonies to tell that a lady must not be kept waiting on such occasions. But as time wore on, he began to feel impatience; and then he ascended the rath, and looked from its summit in the direction he expected Kathleen to approach. Here he lingered, in hope, till evening was closing, and the yellow disc of the moon began to rise above the broad belt of clouds which skirted the horizon; then he began to fear Kathleen had promised him only to be rid of his importunity—or that some fresh influence

had been exercised against him—or that she believed the calumny;—this was worst of all. And so great was his anxiety to remove such a fatal impression from Kathleen's mind, that even in defiance of all reasonable expectation of seeing her, he remained on the rath and strained his sight, through the increasing gloom, to catch the first glimpse of her he wished so much to meet. Still, she came not; and now the moon, emerging from the vapour by which she had been enshrouded, rose above it in all her purity, no longer dimmed by the yellow mist which had tarnished her silvery brightness. Still Rory remained, although he had given up the

“Last pale hope that trembled at his heart.”

But, as the moonlight became so bright, and as he knew the danger of being abroad at such an hour, he crouched in the trench on the summit of the rath, and watched with his eyes above the embankment.

He had just arrived at the conclusion, in

his own mind, it was no use to wait any longer, when he fancied he caught the outline of a figure moving towards him ;—it became more distinct—it was a woman's ; a moment more, and his heart told him it was Kathleen.

He sprang to his feet, and running down the rath, he reached the ditch that bordered the field in time to offer his hand to Kathleen, and assist her over the fence. They stood in bright moonlight ; and Rory could see that an aspect of care was over Kathleen's brow, which even his fervent welcome, and thanks, and blessings, could not dispel.

“ Let us get under the shadow of the bridge,” said Rory.

“ No,” said Kathleen with an air of reserve.

“ Don't let us stand here, however,” said Rory, “ so near the road, and the moon so bright.”

“ We can stand inside the rath,” said Kathleen, leading the way.

They soon stood in the trench of the fort, completely shadowed by the embankment,

while the moonlight fell brightly on the mound that rose within.

"God bless you, Kathleen, for keeping your promise!" said Rory fervently.

"Whatever you 've to say, say quickly, Rory, for I must not stay here long," replied Kathleen.

"Then tell me openly, Kathleen, what is it you *think* you have to accuse me of, and I will explain it all to your satisfaction."

"You left home for a day about three weeks ago?" said Kathleen.

"I did," said Rory.

"You went to the town beyant?"

"I did," said Rory.

"You were in a cellar there?"

"I was."

"And not in the best of company, Rory," said Kathleen reproachfully.

"Worse than, I hope, I 'll ever be in agin," said Rory.

"You own to that, thin?"

"I 'll own to all that 's thrue," said Rory.

"Thin what have you to say about the girl that you were so much in love with?"

"In love with!" said Rory indignantly. "Kathleen, there is but one girl on this earth I love, and that's yourself. I swear it by this blessed light!"

Just as he spoke, as if the light which he adjured had evoked a spirit to condemn him, a dark shadow was cast on the mound before them; and on their both looking round, a figure enveloped in a cloak stood on the embankment behind them.

Kathleen could not suppress a scream, and even Rory started.

"Is that what I hear you say?" said this mysterious apparition. "Kathleen! Kathleen! he said the same to me."

Kathleen could not speak, but stood with clasped hands, in trembling astonishment, gazing with the fascination of fear upon the figure that stood on the bank above them.

"Who are you?" said Rory.

The figure was about to turn, when Rory

caught hold of the cloak in which it was enveloped, and dragged the intruder within the trench of the rath.

“Who are you?” said Rory again, turning round the person to face the light.

“Don’t you know me, Rory O’More?” said the unknown, who threw back the hood of her cloak at the words, and the pale moonbeam fell on the face of the frail one of the cellar.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONTAINING A COUNCIL OF LOVE AND A COUNCIL
OF WAR.

To account for the occurrence which concludes the foregoing chapter, it becomes necessary to revert to Kathleen after her return from the fair. She had spent as restless a night as Rory, and after considering for a long time the fitness of meeting him clandestinely, after all she had heard, was still at a loss how to act, and determined therefore to tell her mother how matters stood, and ask her advice. Between the daughter and mother affection and good understanding had always existed ; but of late there had been an increasing confidence in and leaning towards each other, resulting from the unruly conduct of the son, against whose aggression and waywardness

Kathleen and her mother were obliged to combine, and endeavour by union in the weaker party to make a better defence against the tyranny of the stronger.

Regan had not got up the morning succeeding the fair, in consequence of the punishment he had received from Rory, and was lying under some herbal treatment of his mother's, in a room that was partitioned off the principal apartment of the farmhouse, which served not only for the kitchen, but for all the daily purposes of the family. Kathleen had just come from her brother's room, whither she had gone to offer any attendance he might require, and gently closed the door after her, thinking that he had fallen asleep, while in fact he had only indulged in a dogged silence to her kind inquiries, and feigned slumber to be rid of her.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Kathleen drew a seat near her mother, who was knitting, and settling herself down to her spinning-wheel, she began to work very industriously for some time in silence. The hum of

the wheel was interrupted in a minute or two by a short cough; and as Kathleen's fingers were kept busy, and her eyes fixed upon them, so that she need not have the necessity of meeting those of her mother, there could not be a more favourable moment for the opening of the delicate affair she had in hand; and so, after one or two more little coughs, she ventured to say, "Mother."

It may be remarked, that when people have any delicate subject to discuss, more particularly all affairs of the heart, there is something in the mere sound of their voices that gives you to understand what they are about, before a word relating to the subject is said.

Now, Kathleen's mother was as wise as mothers in general are about such matters, seeing that they have had such affairs of their own on their hands; and so, the very minute Kathleen said "Mother," that respectable individual knew what was coming just as well as if she were a witch.

"Well, *alanna?*" said the mother softly,





coaxing her child's heart out of its secrecy by the encouraging tone of her voice, as a bird chirps its young for the first time from the security of its nest.

"There's something I wish to tell you," said Kathleen.

"Well, darlin', I dar say it's nothing but what I'll be glad to hear."

"I'm afeard you'll think me foolish, mother."

"Throth, I never seen the sign iv a fool an you yet, *alanna bawn*."

Here there was a pause, filled up only by the buzz of the spinning-wheel. The mother thought she had best break the ice; so, with a tone of gentle pleasantry in her manner, to deprive the subject of its sternness,—to 'take the cold out of it,' as it were,—she said, "I suppose some o' the boys has been talkin' to you?"

"Yis, ma'am," said Kathleen faintly, blushing up to her ears at the same time, while the wheel went round at a desperate rate and the thread was broken.

While Kathleen mended the thread of her spinning, her mother took up that of the conversation.

" Well, dear,—well and good,—and why not? Sure, it's only raysonable, and what's before us all in our time, when it's God's will. And who's the boy, Kathleen dear?"

Kathleen, after swallowing her breath three or four times, said,

" Rory O'More, mother."

" Sure, thin, but you're the happy girl! God bless you, child, and mark you to grace, to have the very pick o' the counthry axin' you!"

" Indeed, I thought so myself, mother; but—"

" But what, dear?"

" Why, Shan, you know, mother."

" Yis, yis, dear;" and the mother sighed heavily. It was some time before she could resume the conversation, and in the interim she raised her apron to dry a tear that trickled down her cheek.

How deep is the guilt of the child who causes the tears of a parent !

" If Shan couldn't get Mary O'More, (and more is his loss, indeed !) that is no rayson, darlin', that you wouldn't have Rory."

" But Shan is very much agin it, mother."

" How do you know, dear ?"

" He suspects, somehow, that I had a liking for him."

" *Had* a liking !" said the mother. " Why, *haven't* you a liking, Kathleen ?"

" Why, you see, mother, he towld me things of him ; and if the things was thtrue, Rory wouldn't be as good as I thought him."

" How do you mane, darlin' ?"

Here Kathleen entered into an explanation of how Regan had poisoned her mind against Rory, and told her mother all she had heard about the adventures of the cellar ;—how, subsequently, she had met Rory at the fair—of her coolness, of his disavowal of guilt, and request that she would meet him to explain everything.

" He said, ' This evening, at the rath, beside the bridge — ' "

" Whisht ! " said the mother, pointing to Regan's room ; " *he* 's awake."

And so he was, and heard the principal part of the conversation between his mother and his sister ; and it was in raising himself in the bed, the better to catch the latter part of the discourse, that he had alarmed the watchful ear of his mother : for poor Kathleen was so absorbed in her subject, that she quite forgot her proximity to her brother.

Regan now called for some one to attend him ; and on his mother appearing, he said he was much refreshed by the last sleep he had, and would get up.

" Indeed, you 're betther where you are, Shan, for to-day," said his mother.

" No, no, bed kills me ; it 's not fit for a man : I 'll be the betther of some fresh air."

" Sure, you wouldn't go out, Shan, and your face in that condition ? " said his mother.

" Thim who doesn't like my face," said he,

"needn't look at it ;" and despite of his mother's entreaties, he proceeded to dress himself, which when he had accomplished, he sallied forth.

"Why, thin, where can Shan be goin' ?" said Kathleen.

"Oh, musha, how should I know !" said the mother. "He's never aisy at home, God help him !"

"Well, mother, what do you think about my goin' to the rath ?"

"I think you'd betther go there, darlin': I don't think myself that Rory O'More would be as bad as you wor made to b'lieve."

"Indeed, mother, it was agin' my heart I b'lieved anything bad of him."

"To be sure, darlin', and it's only fair to hear what the boy has to say."

"Thin you think I may go ?"

"Yis, *ma vourneen* ; but in case evil tongues would say anything, I'll go along wid you."

Kathleen, after some hesitation, said, "But maybe Rory would be shy of seeing you, mother ?"

"Sartinly, dear, and I'll only go along with you convaynient to the rath. I'll stay a thrifle behind you, so that he won't see me; but at the same time I'll be near enough, so that no one shall have the occasion to say a light word o' you—for there's no knowing what ill-natured tongues may invint."

This being settled, the mother and daughter awaited the arrival of the evening—the mother with interest, the daughter with impatience.

In the mean time, Shan Dhu was not idle. He had heard enough of the conversation between Kathleen and his mother to find that Rory's interest was as strong with the latter as the former, and the thought was poison to him. When he found the appointment with Rory wàs to be kept, he determined to frustrate the happy result which must ensue if it were permitted to take place without the intervention of another party, and he determined in his own mind who that party should be. He was no stranger to the damsel whose blandishments had been thrown away upon

Rory, and he found that a bitter hatred existed against him in that quarter: nevertheless, though he must have known that this could have arisen but from one cause, he it was who was base enough to insinuate to Kathleen that an attachment subsisted between the girl and Rory.

It was to find this unfortunate woman Shan Regan left his house. He knew where to seek her, and met in her a ready person to act up to his wishes. He held out the opportunity of gratifying her revenge upon Rory thus:—to blast his hopes with the girl of his heart, by accusing him of treachery and falsehood, and laying her shame to his charge.

To this the nymph of the cellar assented; and thus is accounted for, her startling appearance at the rath, which stunned with surprise our hero and Kathleen, to whom we must now return.

CHAPTER XIX.

SHOWING THAT MOTHERS IN THE COUNTRY CONTRIVE
TO MARRY THEIR DAUGHTERS, THE SAME AS MOTHERS
IN TOWN.

WHEN Kathleen saw the handsome features of the woman who had been pointed out to her on the platform at the fair disclosed in the moonlight, she recognised them at once, for they were of that striking character not easily forgotten ; and coming, as she did, to the rath in the hope of having her doubts of Rory's truth dispelled, and instead of that, finding them thus strengthened by such terrible evidence, she shuddered with a faint scream and sank to the earth.

"Look what you 've done!" said Rory, stooping to raise the fainting girl, which he did, and

supported her in his arms, as he turned to the ill-omened intruder, and said reproachfully, “What did I ever do to deserve this?”

“Do!” said she, and her eyes glared on him with the expression of a fiend—“Do!—What a woman never forgets nor forgives—and I’ll have my revenge o’ you, you cowld-blooded thief, I will!—That’s your *innocent girl*, I suppose!—Mighty innocent indeed, to meet a man inside a rath, by the pleasant light o’ the moon!—How innocent she is!”

“May the tongue o’ ye be blisthered in fire,” said Rory with fury, “that would say the foul word of her! Away wid you, you devil! the ground’s not wholesome you thread on. Away wid you!”

She shrunk before the withering words and the indignant tone of the lover, and retired to the top of the embankment; but ere she descended, she stretched forth her arm in the attitude of menace to Rory, and said with a voice in which there was more of hell than earth,

" Make the most o' your innocent girl to-night, *Misther O'More*, for it's the last you'll ever see of her ! You think to have her, you do,—but she'll never be yours ; for if I pay my soul for the purchase-money, I'll have my revenge o' you !—ha ! ha !—remember my words —never ! never ! —ha ! ha ! ha !" and with something between the laugh of a maniac and the howl of a hyena, she rushed down the hill, leaving Rory horrified at such a fearful exhibition of depravity.

When Rory proposed to Kathleen, on their meeting, that they should stand within the shadow of the bridge, it may be remembered that she refused to do so ; for her mother, who had accompanied her, decided on remaining out of sight in that very spot, while Kathleen should enter the rath for her conference with Rory.

She had seen her daughter and our hero ascend to the top of the mound, and in a very

short time after was surprised to observe a third person take the same course. This excited her curiosity, and she watched anxiously ; and it was not long until she saw the figure descending the mound rapidly, and running towards the very point where she stood. The mother immediately crouched under some bushes to escape observation, and the sound of hurried steps having approached close to her place of ambush, suddenly stopped, and she heard, in a somewhat low, but perfectly clear tone, the name of "Shan" pronounced, and soon after it was repeated. "Shan Dhu," said this unexpected intruder.

"Here I am," was answered to the summons.

The name "Shan Dhu" being that of her own son, Kathleen's mother had her attention still more aroused ; and the voice in which the response was made induced her to believe that it was Regan who answered. Peering forth from the bushes as well as she might, she saw the figure of a man emerge from under one of the dry arches of the bridge, and then

there was no longer a doubt on the subject ; —it was Shan Regan who came forth to meet the woman who had just run down the hill.

“ Well ?” said Regan.

“ I ‘ve done it !” said the woman.

“ What did he say ?”

“ Oh, they were both knocked all of a heap.”

“ But, did you make her sinsible that the sneaking thief was a black-hearted desaiver ?”

“ Throth, I did. Didn’t you hear her screech ?”

“ No.”

“ Thin in throth she did. I towld her that he had promised me before her, and she dhopt down in a fit.”

“ That ’ll do,” said Regan. “ And now we may as well be joggin’ since the business is done ; we mustn’t be seen near the place.” And he with his hardened accomplice hastened from the spot.

Kathleen’s mother remained for some time in her place of concealment, that Regan and his abandoned companion might not be aware of her presence.

During the few minutes she felt it necessary to remain in concealment, her mind became fully impressed with the conviction that some deception had been practised upon Kathleen, and manifestly through the instrumentality of her brother.

When the mother thought she might emerge from her ambuscade in safety, she hastened up the side of the rath; as her fears for her daughter had been excited when she heard that "she had dropt down in a fit."

On reaching the interior of the fort, she heard Rory expostulating with Kathleen on the improbability of the accusation made against him; for, before the mother had arrived, Rory had contrived, by brushing the dew from the grass with his hand, and sprinkling the moisture over Kathleen's face, to recover her from the state of insensibility into which the sudden appearance and fearful accusation of Rory's enemy had thrown her.

"Oh, why did you bring me here at all?" said Kathleen in a tone of agony.

"To clear myself to you, Kathleen," said Rory.

"Clear yourself! Oh, Rory! that dreadful woman!"

"By all that's sacred, Kathleen, I know no more about her than the child unborn."

"Oh, can I b'lieve it, afther all I've heard and seen, Rory? *Can I b'lieve it?*"

"Kathleen, as I hope to see heaven, I'm innocent of what she accuses me."

"Oh, I wish I could b'lieve it!" said Kathleen, sobbing.

"Thin you may b'lieve it, my darlin'," said her mother, who now joined them.

This fresh surprise made Kathleen scream again; but, recognising her mother, she sprang into her arms.

"Oh, mother dear! mother dear! but I'm glad to see you," said the excited girl, who had not caught the meaning of the words her mother uttered.

"Oh, mother! mother! you are thrue to me, at all events; you'll never desaive me."

"Nor I either, Kathleen," said Rory ; "and sure, here's your mother to bear witness for me. Don't you hear what she says?"

"What? what?" said Kathleen, bewildered.

"Compose yourself, dear!" said the mother. "Don't b'lieve the bad things you've heard of Rory : they're not thrue—I'm sure they're not thrue."

"Bad luck to the word!" said Rory, plucking up his courage.

"But that woman—" said Kathleen, "where is she?" and she looked round in alarm.

"She's gone, dear," said the mother, soothingly ; and Rory, in less gentle accents, made no scruple of saying, "*Where?*"

"Rory," said Kathleen's mother with a serious tenderness in her manner, "I b'lieve that you love my child, and that you mane to be thrue to her."

"May I never see glory if I don't!" said Rory fervently.

The mother took their hands, and joining them, said, "Then I give her to you, Rory,

with all the veins o' my heart ; and may my blessing be on you !”

Rory took the yielding girl tenderly in his arms and kissed her unresistingly, alternately blessing her and her mother for making him “the happiest fellow in Ireland,” as he said himself.

How all this sudden revolution of affairs in his favour had occurred, Rory gave himself no trouble to inquire,—he was content with the knowledge of the fact ; and after escorting Kathleen and her mother within sight of their house, he turned his steps homeward, and re-entered his cottage a happier man than he had left it.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH RORY O'MORE PROVES HIMSELF TO BE A MAN
OF LETTERS.

THE next morning Rory arose in high spirits, and determined on amusing himself with a piece of sarcastic waggery that he intended executing upon Sweeny, the reformed Papist attorney, whose apostasy was a source of great indignation to Rory.

It so happened that the tombstone of old Sweeny, the apothecary, bearing the Popish phrase, "Pray for the soul of Denis Sweeny," stood most provokingly close to the pathway leading to the church-door; so that every Sunday, when his son the attorney was going to attend divine service *as by law established*, his

Church-of-Englandism was much scandalised by having this damning (and damnable) proof of his apostasy staring him in the face. Not that he cared for it *himself*: he was one of those callous-hearted people who could “have botanised on his mother’s grave,” therefore this proof of his former creed on the grave of his father could have given him no trouble; but he did not like the evidence to remain there in the sight of other people, and he had asked Rory O’More how the nuisance could be abated.

Our hero was indignant with the petty-minded pettifogger, and wished to retaliate upon him for the renunciation of his old creed; for the Roman Catholics have the same bitter feeling against the man who secedes from their profession of faith, as those of the Church of England entertain against the dissenters from them. And why not? If the Church of England is right in condemning step number two, the Church of Rome has rather better cause to object to step number one; for “*c'est le premier pas qui coûte.*”

So Rory, after hearing the attorney's complaint, said he thought he could rectify the objectionable passage on the tomb-stone. How he accomplished this will be seen.

After breakfast he asked De Lacy, would he go over to see "the churches," as the old burial-place in the neighbourhood was called, where the ruins of some monastic buildings stood, one of which had been repaired and roofed in for the parish church. De Lacy assented to the proposal, and Rory suggested that they should endeavour to get Phelim O'Flanagan to accompany them.

"His school lies in our way," said Rory, "and we may as well ax him to come; for there is a power of owld anshint tombstones in it, in owld Irish, and he can explain them to you, sir."

True it was, that here many an ancient grave-stone stood, mingled with those of later days;—the former bearing the old Irish

op do.

the latter, the

PRAY FOR—

showing, that though conquest had driven the aboriginal Irish from the spot, the religion, though not the language of the people, had survived their downfall.

And here what a striking evidence is given of the inutility of penal laws!—nay, worse than inutility; for prohibition seems to act on human nature rather as a productive than a preventive cause of the thing forbidden, and the religion of the Irish, like their native shamrock, by being trampled on, becomes prolific.

Their language is passing away, though it was not penal to speak it; but their religion has lasted because penalty attended its profession, and the faith of a persecuted people is still recorded in the language of the oppressor.

Thanks to God! the days of persecution are past; and fair fame to England in cancelling from her statutes the unjust and unholy penalties that man, in his bigoted profanity, had dared to interpose between the worship of the creature to the Creator!

And Fortune never dispensed a brighter honour on her favourite, than in shedding over the name of WELLINGTON the glory of being the agent of this blessing to his native land. This mingling of the olive with his laurels increases their brightness, as it will their endurance: for when many a victory he has won shall cease to be remembered, the emancipation of his country from the bondage of bigotry will never be forgotten; and soothing be the thought in the hero's last hour, that though many of his achievements have evoked the curses of a foreign land, this greatest triumph of his life will be remembered with blessings by his countrymen!

When Phelim was asked to bear De Lacy and our hero company, he was immersed in the mysteries of his school, and could not immediately accompany them; but he promised to follow soon, and for that purpose gave his scholars half a holiday, for which beneficence on his part they threw up their hats,—that is, such of them as had any; while those of them who had

not, made up the deficiency by extra shouting ; and Phelim, his school being dismissed, followed De Lacy and Rory to “the churches.”

This burial-ground was not more than a quarter of a mile from the village ; yet, though in the neighbourhood of man’s habitation, it was particularly lonely ; for, except on Sunday, when the small Protestant congregation went to divine service, or that the occasion of a funeral called the peasantry to the spot, it was little frequented.

Indeed, a churchyard is generally avoided ; nor can it be wondered at that the resting-place of the dead should have an appalling influence on the ignorant and superstitious, when even to the most enlightened there is a chastened and solemn tone of feeling produced on entering a place of sepulture.

Much of this feeling is lessened, or at least the indulgence of it is in a more elevated tone, when we walk through the range of magnificent monuments lining the vaulted aisle of some noble abbey. Here the vanity of our nature is

indirectly flattered by witnessing the tribute that posterity pays to greatness, and Glory more than half divides the triumph with Death. But in the lonely country churchyard, where some plain head-stone or nameless mound of earth is all that is left to tell that *there* rests a being once instinct with life as ourselves, and where, instead of vaulted roof and clustered columns, the ruins of some lowly chapel stand, they, like all around, telling of decay,—there it is that the contemplation of mortality exercises its most depressing influence, and the thought of death strikes coldly on the heart.

De Lacy accompanied Rory to the burial-place, which stood on a small mound, the grave-stones rising in bare relief against the sky, which here and there peeped through the shattered mullions of some window in the ruined wall of one of the little churches, giving an air of peculiar desolation to the place, which was increased, perhaps, by the slated roof of one of them, which was repaired and employed

as the Protestant parish church. A pathway led to this building, and Rory came to a stand where, on one side of the path, stood a rather conspicuous tombstone with this inscription :

Pray for the soul of
DENIS SWEENEY,
who departed, &c.

“ Do you see that ?” said Rory to De Lacy.

“ Yes.”

“ Well, that’s what brings me here to-day.”

“ How ?” said De Lacy.

“ Why, that’s owld Denny Sweeny’s tombstone ; and you see the poor owld fellow axes every one to pray for his sowl—and why not ?—and indeed I hope he’s in glory. Well, you see by that he was a good Catholic, and a dacent man he was ; and when he died, he or-dhered the same tombstone to be put over him, and paid my own father for cuttin’ the same.”

“ Is it after he died ?” said De Lacy.

“ Oh, no—you know what I mane ; but sure a slip o’ the tongue doesn’t matter. Well,

as I was sayin', my father cut the same tomb-stone—and a nate bit o' work it is; see the ilitant crass an it, and cut so deep that the divil wouldn't get it out of it,—God forgi' me for sayin' divil to the crass!"

"It's deep enough, indeed," said De Lacy.

"Ay, and so I towld that dirty brat, Sweeny—the 'turney, I mane—when he axed me about it. What do you think he wants me to do?" said Rory.

"To take it back for half-price, perhaps," said De Lacy.

"Faith, he hasn't that much fun in him to think of sitch a thing."

"What was it, then?"

"Why, he wants me to alther it," said Rory.

"For himself, I hope?" said De Lacy.

"No," said Rory; "though in throth I'd do *that* with pleasure, for he'd be no loss to king or countrry. But, as I was tellin' you, he comes to me the other day, and towld me it was disgraceful to see sitch a thing as

'pray for the sowl' on his father's tombstone in sitch enlightened times as these, when people knew betther than to pray for people's sowls.

" 'They might do worse,' says I.

" 'It might do for the dark ages,' says he, 'but it won't do now ;' laying it all on the dark ages, *by the way*, jist as if people didn't know that it was bekaze when he goes to church every Sunday his poor honest father's tombstone stares him in the face, the same as if the voice out of the grave called to him and said, 'Oh, thin, Dinny, my boy, is it goin' to church you are?' Not that he'd mind that, for the cowld-hearted thief hasn't the feelin' to think of it ; but it's the dirty pride of the little animal ;—he doesn't like the *rale* Prodestants to see the thing stan'in' in evidence agin him. So I thought I'd divart myself a bit with him, and says I, 'Sure the tombstone doesn't do you nor anybody else any harm.'—'Yes, it does,' says he ; 'it stands in evidence agin my father's common sinse, and I 'm ashamed of it.'

"Oh!" said Rory feelingly, "what luck can the man have that says he's ashamed of his father's grave!"

The feeling and touching appeal reached De Lacy's heart.

Rory continued—"Ashamed, indeed!—Throth, an' well he may say he's ashamed!—not for his father, though—no—but well may he be ashamed to change his creed!"

"You shouldn't blame any man for his religious belief, Rory," said De Lacy.

"No more I would, sir, if it was his belief that he was reared in; but —"

"Oh!" said De Lacy, interrupting him, "if a man feels that he has been instructed in a belief which his conscience will not permit him to follow —"

"Sure, sir," said Rory, interrupting in his turn, "I wouldn't blame him for that neither: but is it Sweeny you think does it for that? not he, in throth,—it's jist for the lucre, and nothin' else. And sure, if he had the feeling in him to love his father, sure it's not altherin'

his tombstone he'd be, that was made by his father's own directions : and suppose he thinks that *he* ought to be a Protestant ever so much, sure isn't it bad of him to intherfare with his poor father's dyin' request that they *would* pray for his sowl?"

"That I grant you," said De Lacy.

"And so he comes to me to ask me to alther it. 'For what?' says I. 'Bekaze I'm ashamed of it,' says he. 'Why?' says I. 'Bekaze it's only Popery,' says he. 'Well,' says I, 'if it's Popery ever so much, sure it's your father's doin',— and any shame there is in it, it is to him, and not to you, and so you needn't care about it; and if your father did wish people to pray for his sowl, I think it very bad o' you to wish to prevent it.'—'It can do him no good,' says he. 'It can do him no harm, anyhow,' says I.

"So he couldn't get over that very well, and made no answer about the good or the harm of it, and said he didn't want to argue the point

with me, but that he wanted it althered, and as my father done the job, he thought I was the person to alther it.' 'And how do you want it changed?' says I. 'Take out 'Pray for the sowl:' says he, 'that's nothing but Popery.' 'My father always cut the sowl very deep,' says I, 'and to take it out is impossible; but if it's only the Popery you object to, I can alther it if you like, so that you can have nothing to say agin it.'—'How?' says he. 'Oh, let me alone,' says I. 'You're no *sculpture*,' says I, 'and don't know how I'll do it; but you'll see yourself when it's done.'—'You won't charge me much?' says he. 'I'll charge you nothing,' says I; 'I'm not a mason by thrade, and I'll do the job for love.'—'But how do you mane to do it?' says he agin. 'Oh, never mind,' says I; 'go your ways, I'll do the job complate, and next Sunday, when you go to church, you'll see the divil a bit o' Popery will be in the same tombstone.'

—‘That’s all I want,’ says he. ‘Thin we’ll be both plazed,’ says I.—And now I’m come here to-day to do the very thing.”

“And how do you mean to effect the alteration, Rory ?” said De Lacy.

“As aisy as kiss hand,” said Rory. “Jist do you amuse yourself with looking into the churches ; there’s some quare carvings round the windows and doors, and a mighty curious owld stone crass up there beyant. Or, if you like, sir, sit down beside me here with your book, and you can read while I work.”

De Lacy had not been long engaged in reading, when old Phelim made his appearance ; and with so amusing a cicerone, De Lacy passed a couple of hours pleasantly enough in looking over the antiquities of the place.

After the lapse of that period, Rory had completed his task, and sought his friends to show them how thoroughly he had neutralised the Popery that had so much distressed Sweeny.





"How could you have done it so soon?" said De Lacy.

"Oh, I won't tell you—you must see it yourself," said Rory.

"It is the simplest thing in life — four lettthers did it all."

Rory now conducted De Lacy and Phelim to the tombstone, and the moment they stood before it they both indulged in hearty laughter.

Rory had carved over the objectionable request the phrase "DON'T," so that the inscription ran thus :

DON'T

Pray for the soul of
DENIS SWEENEY.

"Isn't that the thing?" said Rory.

"Capital!" said De Lacy.

"Isn't that sarving the little viper right! You see he darn't say at wanst, out, honest, that he was ashamed *for his own sake*, bekaze

he was a turncoat; but he lays the blame *on the Popery*. Oh, in throth, there's many a dirty turn and many a cruel thing done on us; and thim that does the thing is ashamed to own to the right cause, and so they lay the blame on the Popery. By my sowl! they ought to be obleeged to Popery for giving them sitch a convanient excuse for not havin' things called by their right names."

"But won't Sweeny be very angry about this?" said De Lacy.

"Faith, to be sure he will," said Phelim, shaking his head. "Rory, *ma bouchal*, though I can't deny your wit, I cannot compliment you with an epithalamium upon your prudence: you have made that little bitther attorney your inimy to the ind o' time."

"I know that," said Rory; "but what do I care?"

"Rory, my boy, Prudence, *Prudentia*, as the Latins had it,—Prudence, my boy, is one of the cardinial virtues."

"Well, to expose humbuggin' is as cardinal as ever it was."

"So you won't listen to me? — *Magister docet, sed vos verò negligitis.*"

"Well, who's sayin' it's prudent? — But all I stand up for is the altheration; and isn't *that* compleat?"

"That there is no denyin'," said Phelim.

"And all with four lettthers!"

"You have demonstherated it as compleat wid four," said Phelim, "as I do my mattamatics wid three—Q. E. D."

"By dad! I have a great mind to put Q.E.D. at the end of it all," said Rory.

"For what?" said De Lacy.

"Bekase it is *what was to be demonstherated,*" said Rory.

"Faith, I'm glad to see you remember your mattamatics still," said Phelim.

"Wouldn't it be grate fun!" said Rory.

"It's bad enough as it is," said De Lacy, "without making matters worse. I am afraid, Rory, this was very unwise."

" Yet you can't help laughin' at it," said Rory.

" Indeed I can't," said De Lacy.

" Well, and so will the Prodestants laugh at that contemptible little upstart when they see it, and that's all I want. There's nothing an upstart feels half so much as a laugh against him," said Rory, making a sagacious comment upon his own imprudent act.

" Quite true," said De Lacy, " and therefore the attorney will never forgive you."

" The beauty of it is," said Rory, still enjoying his joke, " that he can't complain openly about it; for all he said, was that he was ashamed about the *Popery* of it. Now, I've taken the Popery out of it, at all events."

" Certainly," said De Lacy; " but, at the same time, you have increased Sweeny's cause of inquietude by making the offensive phrase more obnoxious."

" That's what I meant to do," said Rory boldly; " I've caught him in his own thrap. The little scheming 'turney complained only

about the *Popery*; now, with four letters I've destroyed more Popery than the parson could do with twice as many."

"Upon my word, Rory," said De Lacy, smiling, "many men of *letters* have failed with the whole alphabet to alter a text so completely as you have done with *four*."

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH SHAN REGAN AND SOLDERING SOLOMON GIVE A TOUCH OF THEIR QUALITY, AND RORY UNDERGOES A TRIAL OF TEMPER.

ALTHOUGH Regan's mother had discovered his perfidy towards his sister and Rory, and relieved them from the consequences that might have ensued from it, she did not reveal to Rory the treachery of which her son had been guilty,—for still he *was* her son, and with a mother's tenderness she sought to screen him, in the eyes of our hero, from the contempt which so base a means of indulging his dislike must have produced.

But she saw how deep the hatred to Rory must be on Regan's part, to urge him to such practices as he had exercised against him, and

until matters were riper for a disclosure,—in fact, until Kathleen and he should be just going to be married,—she begged of Rory to say nothing about what had passed; for if it came to Shan's knowledge, he would be “showing his temper” at home, and it was as well not to vex him until the time came when the definitive step could be taken which would render his anger of no avail; for though she would not betray to Rory the baseness of her son, she had no hesitation in owning that he was not his friend.

It was with this understanding that Rory and Kathleen parted the night of their meeting at the rath. But though Mrs. Regan kept the means of her knowledge a secret from Rory, she revealed to her daughter how she became possessed of the knowledge that exposed the treacherous influence that had been employed to ruin the hopes of two innocent people, not only to satisfy Kathleen's inquiries of how her mother could vouch for Rory's conduct, but in order to put Kathleen

on her guard against betraying to her brother any symptom of his plot having failed.

"For what would we do if he thought we found him out!" said she.

Miserable mother! whose only hope of domestic quiet lay in seeming to be ignorant of the ruffianism of her child.

With all her caution, however, though Kathleen did not betray any symptoms of happiness in her brother's presence, and subdued her looks and manner as much as possible, still Regan was not quite satisfied with the apparent state of things at home: not that he suspected his plot had been discovered, but he feared that it had not been sufficiently effective, or that Kathleen would exhibit more distress. He, therefore, went further in endeavouring to depreciate Rory O'More in everything he could say and do, not only at home, but abroad.

There are some natures so essentially vile that they can never forgive another's success. Such was Regan's. But to this habitual base-

ness of mind, was added the stimulus of dislike in Rory's affair; and that his sister's attachment to him seemed still to survive the threats and falsehoods and machinations urged against it, increased that dislike. But it was Rory's triumph over him at the fair that completed the sum of his hatred. This, Regan looked upon as a personal disgrace, and the remembrance of it sank deep in his heart; and deeper and deeper it sank every day, and the depth of the remembrance called for a greater measure of revenge. Until this could be satisfied, he in the mean time got up a piece of slander against Rory, by falsifying all the circumstances of the visit to the fair.

This he did with the most thorough malevolence and injurious perversion of all the facts. He spoke amongst his fellows, openly in the public-houses, where most of his time was spent, in a spirit of jeering slightingness of Mary O'More being “gallivanted round the fair by that omadhaun Conolly,—and thrated Misther Rory, too, I hear. Well,

people's changed ! I thought, wanst, that Rory had more sperit than to be takin' thrates from another man on account of his sisther's purty face."

Now, though he got hearers who were base enough to listen to this, he did not find one to believe him, for they were well aware of the secret and real cause of his spleen. But this disparagement did not satisfy him :—there was another and a viler misrepresentation of which he was guilty. The business of the ducks, which, if truly told, he knew would only raise a laugh against him, he twisted with the true serpent spirit that actuated him, into a crime, and, with the expression of *regret* which is so often the outward sign of the secret *rejoicing* of the bad man's heart, he declared he was sorry that Rory " let himself down so much, for he thought he was above *stalin'* a poor pitiful pair o' ducks: throth, it wasn't worth while bein' a *thief* for such a *thrifte*."

All this in the course of a few days travelled to the next parish, where Rory lived ; for

even in sylvan scenes the dryads have it not all to themselves,—there be evil geniuses in the country as well as the town, and “d—d good-natured friends” are to be found everywhere; and some of these same good-natured folk told Rory what was said of him.

The first bearer of the disagreeable intelligence was Old Solomon the tinker, who delighted in having it in his power to say bitter things of everybody—or even to them, when he could do it by innuendo, which was a favourite weapon of his, and one he used like a master.

It happened, during the day Rory and De Lacy went to “the churches,” that Old Solomon paid the Widow O’More a visit. In doing this he had two objects: in the first place, he enacted guide to De Welskein, who wanted to see De Lacy; and in the next, he was sure of “entertainment,” as the signboards have it, for himself and his ass.

Now Sol. was kindly received at the cottage of the widow, and had some fresh buttermilk

and good potatoes given him, with a seat in the chimney corner into the bargain, where he roasted his shins, and smoked his pipe, and said sour things of half the country,—and, in short, made himself perfectly happy. But after spending a couple of hours thus, he began to exhibit symptoms of impatience at Rory's absence ; for he wanted to proceed further, and yet did not like to go without giving to Rory the pleasant intimation that he was gaining the reputation of being a very ingenious purloiner of other people's property :—waiting to wound the man, the hospitable shelter of whose roof he had enjoyed, not only then, but at all times. And this, he must have been conscious, arose from pure good-heartedness; for his habitual influence through the motive of fear did not exist there as in other places, Rory being too sharp a fellow to let Solomon exercise such a power over him : and it was partly this fact that made the old scoundrel the more anxious to gall, at least, where he could not govern.

De Welskein waited patiently enough the return of De Lacy, as he consoled himself with making compliments to Mary O'More, and doing the agreeable, as Frenchmen generally do: but Solomon from time to time went from the fireplace to the door to look out for Rory, whom, at last, he saw approaching.

When Rory entered the cottage, he welcomed De Welskein, who seemed rather constrained in his manner towards him, and asked for De Lacy; Rory informed him he would soon return,—that he left him and Phelim behind in the churchyard, looking over some old tombstones, but that they would not be long absent.

“And how are you, Sol.?” said Rory.

“Oh, as well as any one wishes me,” replied Solomon bitterly.

“What are you in sitch a hurry for?” asked Rory; “sure you’re not goin’ yet?” This was said in pure hospitality, for Rory did not like the old cynic.

“Yis, yis,—you’ve had enough of me.”

"Well," said Rory, "plaze yourself and you'll live the longer."

"Throth, thin, the more one lives, the more one wondhers," said Solomon. "Rory *avic*," added he, "will you go and get me the ass?"

"To be sure," said Rory, who went to the outhouse, where the ass had been enjoying a good feed, as well as his master. Reloading him with his panniers, containing Solomon's

"Nippers, twisters, sand, and resin," as well as the three ancient pots and pans, Rory led the animal forth to where Solomon stood awaiting his approach, before the door of the cottage; and when Rory halted the beast before him, the old tinker began very carefully to examine every particular of his ass's furniture and appendages, not forgetting the three old rusty kettles that dangled from the straddle.

Rory enquired if anything was wrong?

"Oh, it's no harm to see if all's right," said Solomon.

"Why, wouldn't it be right?" said Rory.

"Haven't I put on this sthraddle and panniers, and kittles, often enough before?"

"Oh yis,—but I was only seein'—one, two, three,—I was only seein' if all was safe; one can't be too sure these times;—one, two, three:" and he very carefully repeated his scrutiny of the three old kettles as he leisurely pronounced "one, two, three."

Rory's attention was aroused by this repetition of the words which were the signal to the smuggler; and fancying for a moment that Solomon might have discovered his agency in the affair, he became very uneasy, and said,

"What do you mane by reckoning over one, two, three, so often?"

"Oh, these is quare times," said Solomon.

This increased Rory's uneasiness. "How do you mane?" said he.

"And a quare world, so it is,—one, two, three."

"What the dickins are you at, with your 'one, two, three'?" said Rory, whose anxiety increased.

"Only jist seein' that my property's safe," said Solomon, giving a look at Rory, which our hero could not understand, for, his mind still reverting to the signals, could not reach the meaning which Solomon wished to convey, and he was yet unsatisfied what Solomon's reckoning the kettles meant. However, as the tinker went through that process again, and still repeated "one, two, three," Rory said impatiently,

"Tare an' ouns! is it thim owld kittles you're reckonin' agin?"

"Jist countin' them, — is there any harm in that?" said the tinker: "it's betther be sure than sorry."

"Countin' thim!" said Rory, looking at him with all his eyes. "Why, sure you never had more nor three owld rusty kittles in your life; and they're so well known over the countrry, that no one would think to make their own of them, supposin' they wor worth stalin'."

"Oh, some people has quare tastes for what belongs to other people," said Solomon signifi-

cantly,—“one, two, three,—and a kittle might tickle some people’s fancy.”

“The devil tickle you and your fancy!” said Rory, waxing angry. “Why, barrin’ one wanted to hunt a mad dog with it, bad luck to the use any one would have with your owld kittles!”

“Maybe so,” said Solomon with great composure; “but you see,” he added, “some people is so handy at staling a pair o’ ducks, that no one knows but my poor kittles might go asthray:” and he cast a most provoking glance at Rory.

As quick as lightning, the truth flashed upon O’More’s mind, that the frolic at the fair had been misrepresented; and though glad to find his fears regarding the discovery of the signals were unfounded, yet, with flushed cheek and dilated eye, he said in a tone in which wounded pride more than anger was predominant, “What do you mane?”

“Oh, laste said is soonest mended,” said the tinker;—“one, two, three;—I see they’re all safe. Good evenin’ to you, Rory.”

"Stop!" said Rory, confronting him ; "explain to me your dark meaning, and don't lave an affront at the door you were always welkin at?"

"How have I affronted you?" said Solomon, whose frigid coolness of age was in startling relief to the excited fervour of the young man who stood before him.

"You made a dark hint jist now," said Rory.

"Make *light* of it, Rory, *ma bouchal*," said the tinker, taking the halter of his ass in token of departure.

"You shan't go that way," said Rory, beginning to lose his temper ; and he laid his hand on the old man's shoulder in the action of detention, but at the same time with a proper degree of deference to his age.

"And is it stoppin' a man on the road you are now?" said the tinker with a low, spiteful chuckle : "throth, you're improvin' fast!" and he attempted to pass Rory, who now, losing all control of himself, said,

“Bad luck to you, you cruked, spiteful, sawdhering owld thief ! how dar you say the like to an honest man’s son!—Stop on the road, indeed ! —stale ducks ! Is it Regan that has the black heart to say I stole his ducks ?”

“Oh, you know it, thin !” said old Solomon, becoming provoked in turn.

“Know it !” said Rory, seeing his drift ; “it’s well for you you’re past bating, you owld cracked bottle o’ vinegar that you are ! or I’d thrash you within an inch o’ your life. Away wid you, you owld serpent !” and he flung him from him.

The old tinker staggered back, and made a great clatter as he reeled against his old kettles ; but, recovering himself, he led away his ass, saying to Rory however before he went, “I hear they wor uncommon fine ducks !”

Rory was startled by this last expression, —the second part of the signal given to De Welskein.—Was it chance ? or did the old tinker mix up the slander of Regan, and imply his knowledge of Rory’s mission, in the

same breath, to puzzle him? While he was standing in this state of perplexity and vexation, De Lacy came up to him unperceived,—for Rory was looking after the tinker, whose last words De Lacy had heard, and was attracted by, and accosting Rory, who was taken by surprise, said,

“Does that old rascal know anything about our affairs?”

“Faith, I dunna if he does,” said Rory with an air of abstraction that struck De Lacy as peculiar.

“Is it not strange, that he should use the words of our private signal?”

“Faix, an’ it is, and it bothered myself at first,” said Rory, “when he said it; but I think, afther all, he knows nothing about it, and that he only spoke it by chance, and meant something else intirely.”

“What else could he allude to?” said De Lacy.

“I’ll tell you about it, sir, another time,” answered Rory; “for it’s a long story, and

you'd betther not wait for it now, as Mr. Devilskin is in the house waitin' for you."

"De Welskein!" said De Lacy, who entered the cottage as he uttered the name.

"*Bon jour, citoyen capitaine,*" was the address of the smuggler to De Lacy who welcomed him in return; the smuggler continuing to address him in French, desired a private interview; De Lacy pointed to his bed-room, and the Frenchman entered the apartment. De Lacy followed, and as soon as they were within the room, De Welskein pointed to the lock.

"There is no necessity," said De Lacy.

"Don't be too sure of that," said De Welskein, with a very significant shake of the head, and one of the keen and cunning glances of his dark eye.

"What do you mean?" said De Lacy.

The Frenchman laid his finger on his lip, to impress the necessity of silence; and though still speaking his own language, which was sufficient guarantee for secrecy in an Irish cabin, yet the importance of what he had to commu-

nicate was so great, that he placed his mouth close to De Lacy's ear, and said, in the most cautious tone, “ There is a traitor !”

“ A traitor !” echoed De Lacy.

The Frenchman nodded assent, and added, “ We are betrayed.”

De Lacy thought of the words he heard Solomon utter, and said quickly, “ That rascally old tinker ?”

“ *Vieux chaudronnier de campagne?* — No, no.”

“ Who then ?” asked De Lacy.

De Welskein subdued his voice to the lowest whisper and said, “ Rory O'More !”

CHAPTER XXII.

A TRIAL OF TEMPER, AND A TRIAL BY BATTLE.

WHEN De Lacy entered the house, he left Rory standing without, looking after the spiteful old tinker, with his teeth set and his hand clenched ; and could he at the moment have encountered Regan, and had his blow been gifted with death, he would have struck him — so fearfully are generous natures excited on the sudden by insult ; for, that the malicious story emanated from Regan, he had no doubt.

But a few minutes calmed the fierceness of his passion, though he changed not his belief as to the promulgator of the scandal ; and when he reflected that it was the brother of the girl he loved, who was the offender, it perplexed him how to act under the circumstances.

Should he tamely submit to such an insinuation against his character? Against this his nature rebelled; yet to make a wider breach with Regan, was what he could wish to escape, for Kathleen's sake. To balance these considerations quietly in his own mind, he walked down to the river, where, undisturbed, he might take a ruminating ramble.

In the mean while, De Welskein was closeted with De Lacy, who, when he heard the charge against Rory, connected with the singularity of the words he had overheard the tinker utter, and Rory's seeming confusion at the time, was shaken for a moment by the suddenness and distinctness of the accusation against him; but as soon as he had time to recover from the surprise, his better judgment acquitted Rory of the guilt with which he was charged.

He told De Welskein it was impossible; that he knew Rory well, that he was of a chivalrous nature above the taint of so foul a thing as treachery, and he would stake his life on his fidelity.

" You've done that already," said De Wel-skein.

" And would do it again," replied De Lacy.

" You don't know these Irish," said the smuggler.

" Better than you do," answered De Lacy warmly.

" They are full of finesse," said the other.

" They are driven to it by ages of misrule and oppression," said De Lacy : " it is their only protection against the heartless persecutions they are open to on every side ; and if the strong, by their tyranny, force the weak into the last retreat left open to them, on them be the guilt of the habits they have engendered ! Blind as they are cruel, their rulers, while they have made them crafty, will not see the noble traits that are still left them — generosity, courage, devotion to those whom they can respect and trust, and a high sense of honour, which even yet survives all that has been done to crush it in their natures, and resists even the contrary example in their oppressors."

Thus spoke De Lacy, who could not contain his indignation when such a fellow as De Welskein, whose nature was only sensitive to the faults with which he could sympathise, dared to undervalue a people whose finer traits were above his comprehension.

"Believe me, they are cunning as foxes," said De Welskein.

"I know they are," replied De Lacy, "and they have every need of their cunning, as the fox has amongst his hunters. But say no more against the Irish — you forget that I am an Irishman myself."

"But *monsieur* has had the advantage of a French education," said the smuggler, smirking.

"So much the worse for me," De Lacy was going to say ; but, checking himself when he remembered the nature of the rascal to whom he spoke, he contented himself by saying, "Don't flatter yourself I'm the better of that. In short," added he, "you speak in vain to me if you seek to disparage the Irish as a nation ;

but in the particular case of Rory O'More, I would sooner depend on his faith and honour than many a king I could name."

"*A king!*" said De Welskein in a tone of contempt: "I believe so indeed!"

"Or the French Directory either," added De Lacy.

"*Sacré!*" exclaimed the smuggler.

"Say no more, De Welskein: it is as impossible that Rory O'More could be a traitor, as that Hoche could be a coward."

De Welskein seized on the name of Hoche, and repeating it, said, with his eyes fixed *into* De Lacy,—

"*Apropos* of General Hoche: I sent you a letter from him — did you get it?

"No," said De Lacy calmly.

The manifest composure of De Lacy's manner under the circumstances of such a piece of intelligence being communicated, puzzled the Frenchman, who, after a moment's pause, however, continued, "You did not get that letter?"

De Lacy repeated his negative.

"Then," said De Welskein, assuming a triumphant manner, "I sent you such a letter by that immaculate friend of yours (*votre ami sans tache*)."

"I know you did," said De Lacy.

This utterly confounded the Frenchman, who, after a short pause, said, "And why have you not seen it?"

"Because O'More destroyed it."

"Ha, ha!" said the Frenchman exultingly: "he tells you so; — *are you sure of that?*"

"Quite sure," said De Lacy.

"Do you know that he gave private information to the colonel of the town, to save himself from being flogged?"

"I do."

De Welskein seemed quite crest-fallen that all his intelligence, which he expected to swamp De Lacy, seemed to run off him as freely as water from a duck's feathers.

It was now the smuggler's turn to wonder;

and in reply to his numerous questions, De Lacy informed him of all the circumstances necessary to the explanation of Rory's closet-scene with the colonel.

"But," said the Frenchman, with the hope of having one startling fact to advance of which he fancied De Lacy was ignorant, "do you know that the colonel *gave him a pass?*"

"Yes," said De Lacy.

This last monosyllable "*annihilated*" the Frenchman, as he would have said himself; or, as Rory O'More would have exemplified it, "*he hadn't a word to throw to a dog.*"

Now it is necessary to explain how all this suspicion of Rory's conduct arose; and, to do everybody justice, or, as some polite people say, "*to give the d—l his due,*" De Welskein was not to blame in the matter.

Let it be remembered, that when Rory was brought up for examination before the colonel, there was another prisoner present, who was one of the visitors to De Welskein's cellar, and that mutual recognition had taken place

between him and our hero, in the guard-house.

This man was aware also of what occurred at Rory's examination ;— of the threat of flogging,— of the room being cleared when Rory said he had something to communicate to the colonel *in private*,— of the fact of Rory being pronounced free as soon as the room was re-opened — and not only *free*, but favoured with *a pass*— enough to damn his fair fame with all the rebels in Ireland.

All this had been communicated to De Welskein through the friends of this fellow, Betty's husband, who was a very knowing hand in assisting De Welskein's smuggling schemes, and was a United man to boot ; and from certain circumstances coming within the knowledge of Scrubbs, he was detained in prison to be prosecuted for his smuggling offences by the Collector. Now, I believe all fellows who get into gaol while others are at large who have as good a right as themselves, (in their opinion,) to be there too, entertain a

grudge against the parties luckier than they ; but if they suspect any foul play has been used to keep the aforesaid uncaged parties out of limbo, they take good care the fact shall be transmitted from the gaol “ to those whom it may concern.” Now, circumstances, in their outward form, bore strongly against Rory ; and neither the prisoner nor De Welskein could be blamed for looking with a suspicious eye upon the unexplained liberation of our hero.

However, De Welskein was made quite easy by the explanation of De Lacy, who charged him particularly to remove from the minds of all those who were impressed with the belief of Rory’s treachery every trace of doubt as to his fidelity.

This being done, De Welskein left the cottage before Rory’s return, which did not take place until late,— for Rory was so undecided, after all his deliberation, how he should act with respect to Regan, that it was only the deepening shades of evening which warned him homewards.

On his return, he heard he had been inquired for by the scholar, so he tapped at his apartment, and announced his presence to De Lacy, who, invited him to enter, and bidding him close the door, communicated all that had occurred between him and De Welskein.

Rory was indignant that any one should suppose *him* so base as to be guilty of the crime of treachery ; and even when De Lacy pointed out to him the strong circumstantial evidence against him, Rory only exclaimed, “To the devil with their evidence ! I never knew evidence of any good, but to ruin a man’s charâchter.” And indeed Rory’s opinion of evidence is but too often borne out by fact.

“ But,” said he, “ that they should think me guilty of sitch a dirty turn ! *me* — the rale blood o’ the O’Mores ! Bad luck to thim, the slanderers ! Oh, I only wish I had thim to bate the lives out o’ thim ! Throth, I’d fight the whole county on sitch a charge, ‘ one down and another come on.’ ”

De Lacy endeavoured to calm him, but it

was with much difficulty he at last succeeded. Then Rory, in answer to De Lacy's questions about Solomon's allusion to the "uncommon fine ducks," told him the circumstances of the frolic at the fair, which he and Mary, for prudential motives, had previously agreed to say nothing about; and further, communicated Regan's baseness in saying that he had *stolen* the ducks:—"And I wouldn't wondher," said Rory, "if the black-hearted villian was at the bottom o' *this* too."

De Lacy assured him Regan's name had never been mentioned in the business; but Rory declared, that as he found people were goin' about to "take away his charâchter, he would not let it pass with Regan what he had said; for how could he know the beginnin' or end of sitch things? and so the safest way was to make Regan ate his words first."

To do Rory justice, his walk by the river had tended to cool his anger a good deal, and he was rather inclined to trust to the public for a proper estimation of his character, and to

leave the slander of Regan unnoticed, when the fresh information he received from De Lacy added fuel to the fire which had been reduced to embers, and all Rory's indignation blazed up afresh, and confirmed him in the determination to ascertain if Regan had been traducing him,—and if he had, to shame him, by confronting him openly and giving a public contradiction to the private slander with which he had sought to blast him.

Rory's unsatisfied cravings to be justified sent him to bed in a fever. He was tortured by a night of dreaming, in which Fancy played the tormentor. Alternately the grin of old Solomon, or the penetrating eye of De Welskein, confronted him ; and guard-rooms and cellars, empty streets, crowded fairs, old rusty kettles, and roasting ducks, were huddled together in strange confusion. The ducks were the favourites of his dream : he was haunted by a pair all night ;—twirl they went before him, till he twirled and twisted in his sleep as if he were roasting too ; and his mind, with the ingenious art of tormenting which dreaming bestows

upon it, easily converted dangling ducks into hanging criminals, who, by a sudden transition were condensed into one, and that *one*, became indentified with himself, whom he imagined condemned to be hanged for robbery, and brought out to execution, with all the eyes of his friends and acquaintances staring upon him, until the overwhelming sense of degradation and shame awoke him. In vain he strove to sleep; night brought no rest to poor Rory, and the dawn saw him an early and unrefreshed riser.

Immediately after quitting his bed, he started on his tour of discovery, and finding his suspicion as to the author of the calumny against him not unfounded, at once determined on the course he should pursue.—Waiting until the following Sunday, he proceeded to the chapel at the side of the country where Regan resided, which he knew to be the most likely place to meet him, and certainly the most public. For Regan, though a disorderly person, attended mass with punctuality: indeed, so strict is the observance of attendance at public

worship on the part of the Irish peasantry, that the man must be very far gone in crime who disregards it. There was an additional reason too for Rory selecting the day and the place for his purpose: after the celebration of the mass, the congregation do not immediately disperse, but assemble round the building outside, forming a sort of social “ ’change,” where those who have not seen each other for the by-gone week barter civilities, and the current gossip of the day is passed about.

To the chapel, therefore, Rory repaired on the Sunday after his meeting with the tinker, in company with three or four companions, whom he wished to be witnesses of his reproof of Regan for his unhandsome conduct towards him; and when the mass was ended, he and his friends sought about in the crowd, as they stood in detached groups over the road about the chapel, and at length he perceived Regan talking and laughing, the loudest of a noisy cluster of rollicking young fellows, who were cracking jokes on the old men, and saying half-

complimentary, half-impudent things to the young women who passed by them.

Rory walked directly up to Regan ; and there was so close a sympathy between Regan's conscience and Rory's look, that the former changed colour as the latter made a dead stand before him, and looked him straight in the face with the bright and open eye that bears evidence of an honest heart. There was a moment's silence ; after which, Rory was the first to speak.

"Regan," said he, "you have not used me well—and you know it."

"I know little of anything consarning you, and I wish to know less," replied Regan, as he turned on his heel, and was going away ; but Rory laid his hand upon him, and said, firmly,

"Regan, that won't do ! You've said things of me behind backs, that I come to contradict before faces ; and them that knows both of us is here to the fore, to judge between us."

"What are you talkin' about, man?" said

Regan with a swaggering air that but ill concealed his uneasiness.

" You know well what I'm talkin' about," answered Rory ; " and so does them that hears me. Was it good, Regan, to put an ugly turn on an innocent thrick at a fair, and say I stole your ducks ?—I—your owld playmate, and the son of dacent people, and that never disgraced them, nor never will, plaze God !"

" And didn't you take them ?" said Regan with savage effrontery.

" Ay, *take*," said Rory : " but, was *take* the word you used behind my back ?"

" I'm not to pick my words for sitch as you," said Regan, who began to recover the faint twinge of shame that abashed him at Rory's first appearance, and seemed now determined to brazen out the affair.

" Well, I neither pick, nor *stale* either," said Rory ; " and whoever says to the conthrairy hasn't the thruth in them. And here I have come this blessed day, and am afther hearin'

the blessed mass ; and it 's not at this time, and in this place, I would lay the weight of a lie on my sowl ; and yiz are all here round me and hears me, and let them deny me who can ; and I say to your face, Regan, that what you 've been givin' out on me is not the thruth. I wouldn't use a harder word to an owld friend, —though we 're cooler of late."

" What do you mane by harder words ?" said Regan with a menacing air.

" Don't look so angry, Regan. I didn't come here, this quiet and blessed day, to fight ; I only kem to clear myself in the face o' the world ;— and having done that, I have no more to say,— and so let me go my ways in pace and quietness." And Rory was turning away, but Regan prevented him ; and now all his bad passions gaining the ascendency, he said,

" If you mane, by 'harder words,' to say that you come here to give me the lie, it 's what I won't let you or any man do, and if that 's your plan, I can tell you I 'll thrust your

impudent words down your throat with my fist !” and he clenched his hand fiercely in Rory’s face.

“ Regan,” said Rory, commanding himself, “ I towld you I didn’t come here to fight, but to clear myself. Them that knows us both hears me clear myself, and that’s enough for me.”

“ ‘Faith, you’re like your sisther, my buck !” said Regan : “ both o’ yiz will go jist half-ways with a man.”

“ Regan !” exclaimed Rory with an honest vehemence that forced him to hear him till he finished his sentence, “ the black dhrop is in you, or you wouldn’t say an ill word of a dacent girl that never wronged you ! She never liked you, Regan—and you know it. She never wint half-ways with you—and you know it ; and now to your teeth I tell you, you’re a slandherous liar and you know it !”

The word had hardly passed Rory’s lips, when a tremendous blow from Regan was aimed at him, which Rory avoided by nimbly

springing beyond its reach ; and Regan left himself so open by his wild attack, that our hero put in a hit so well directed that his ruffianly foe was felled to the earth. He rose immediately, however, foaming with rage, and was rushing on Rory with tremendous fury, when the bystanders closed in between the combatants, and it was suggested by some that hostilities should proceed no further ; while others proposed that if the men were bent on fighting, it would be best to adjourn to some adjacent field and strip for the encounter. Regan's friends were for the latter course ; while the better-disposed endeavoured to dissuade Rory from exchanging any more blows. But Rory was high-mettled : he said they all could bear witness he strove as far as he could to prevent matters going to such extremities ; but, as the case stood, he'd never let it be said that an O'More refused fight. " I'd rather 'twas any day but Sunday, to be sure," said Rory : " but I heer'd mass ; so, having done my duty to God, I 'm ready to do my duty to man — and in throth I 'll do my best

to plaze him," said he, throwing off the upper part of his dress, lightly, and laughing. "I've the good cause on my side, anyhow; so see fair play, boys, and let him do his worst."

Great interest was excited by the approaching contest. Regan had the reputation of a bruiser, and was rather inclined to take advantage of it when he had to deal with those who permitted such a practice; and the report having gone abroad that he had been worsted by Rory in the trifling turn-up at the fair, gave rise to various opinions on the subject.

Let not this surprise the reader—it was an *event* amongst a village population: to those who are beyond the reach of more exciting objects, the fall of a favorite fighter is of as much importance as the fall of a minister.

The companions of Regan protested the impossibility of Rory's conquest over their champion, but for the chance of his being in liquor at the time; and the friends of Rory—that is to say, the bulk of the community—looked forward to the approaching fight with a degree of

dread that there might be but too much truth in the assertion, and that Rory was about to lose his newly-acquired laurels, which they had been flourishing in the teeth of Regan's party with that sort of second-hand triumph people always indulge in when some “cock of the walk” has been well plucked. They feared the moment was come which should rob them of the opportunity of saying, “Phoo! Regan indeed! Arrah, sure Rory O'More leathered him!”

I will not attempt to describe a boxing-match: it has been often better done than I could do it; and the better it has been done, the more I have always wished it had been left undone. The public have had enough of entertainment in that line; and I have sometimes thought that as in Cookery-books they give you a sort of diagram setting forth the various good things constituting a feast, you may lay down a plan, making a glorious set-out — or one should rather say, a *set-to*, to tickle the palate of a gourmand in the Fancy line. What a bill of fare might be produced with a little rubbing

up of the memory ! At a venture, here goes for a catalogue of items.

Breadbasket.

Buttock.

Gammon.

Fowl.

Game ;—in high condition.

Pepper.

Pickle.

So much might content a *glutton*. Then, if you want to be *groggy*, there's a

Bottleholder and

Claret.

What more need you wish ?—so, make out the fight to please yourself. Of the result, all need be said is, that Regan was savage, and Rory, knowing the power of his adversary, cautious. This, and his activity, did wonders for him ; and after some furious hitting from Regan, which Rory sometimes guarded and sometimes broke away beyond reach of, Regan began to breathe hard, of which our hero took advantage ; the tide soon turned in his favour ;

and doubtless, the conscience of either of the combatants had no insignificant influence upon the fight. The ultimate consequence, however, was, that Rory again triumphed over his malignant adversary ; and a sullen silence on the part of a disappointed few, with a hearty shout from the exulting many, declared that Regan had given in, and Rory O'More was the victor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONTAINING DE LACY'S LETTER,—CONTRASTING THE CONDITIONS OF IRELAND AND ENGLAND.

“Look here, upon this picture—and on this.”

THE glorious news to Britain of the victory of the 11th of October had now spread rejoicing over England, but caused aching to many a heart in Ireland. The Texel fleet was conquered, and its admiral a prisoner in England. No more chance of aid might be looked for from that quarter, and for a short time the hopes of the United Irishmen were blighted.

But in a few days, other news arrived to temper the severity of this blow to their designs, and made them yet more confident of assistance from France.

Other triumphs than Duncan's filled the ear of Europe; for just now the rapid and brilliant

succession of Bonaparte's victories in Italy more than outweighed the naval conquest of Duncan, and Austria saw, one after another, her experienced generals beaten by the young Corsican, and her veteran armies overwhelmed by the raw levies of impetuous France. The 18th of October witnessed the failure of the Bourbon plot in the assemblies of Paris; the Clichy Club was suppressed; Pichegru and Carnot fled; the republic again triumphed over the attempts of the Royalists, and was once more secured under a new Directory. Austria was forced to sign a peace dictated by the enemy, and France was more free than ever to pursue her hostility against England. Then came that tremendous assembling of her victorious troops, which soon after were gathered on her northern shore, under the denomination of the "Army of England;" and then was threatened the memorable "invasion" that occupied all the attention of Great Britain.

This was the period of all others most favourable to the views of the Irish republican party;

and De Lacy, seizing the occasion, despatched a letter to France, urging immediate aid to Ireland, which was ripe for revolt.

His report ran as follows :

“ My last letter was written against the grain ; I had to tell of many unexpected truths, evincing England’s security : but now my words flow from my heart, and I say, Strike for Ireland, and it will be an easy victory. Here all is ripe for revolution. The besotted and cruel intolerance of the party in power, and the deplorable wretchedness and long-suffering of the neglected and oppressed people, cannot go any farther.

“ The former cannot be greater tyrants, nor the latter greater slaves ; the one party cannot add greater weight to their chain, nor the other ever have greater cause to wish it broken. Come, then, and strike the manacles from the bondsmen !

“ This is indeed the land of misery and misrule ! How the sister island, as she is called, of Great Britain, can be in so degraded a state, while England revels in prosperity, is one of

those enigmas which baffles all attempt at solution. In contrast to the state of England, listen to a rough sketch of the condition of this lovely but wretched country.

“ One striking difference between the two islands is, that while in England society consists of many grades, sinking slightly the one beneath the other, but presenting no startling difference in the descent ; in Ireland there are but two,—the upper and the lower. There is a sort of mongrel middle rank, but consisting of too few to constitute anything like a class, in comparison with the others. In England there are many degrees between the peer and the peasant ;—but not so here : the *cementing* portions of society are wanting ; the wholesome links that bind it together exist not here ;—in short, Ireland may be comprised under two great heads,—those who inflict, and those who suffer.

“ In Ireland the aristocracy seem to live wholly for themselves : the poor they seem to consider utterly unworthy of being thought

of. Look at the English tenantry,—lived amongst by their landlords, and their comforts cared for; while the poor Irish are left to take what care they can of themselves. If the fever visit an English village, there is the manor-house to apply to, whence the hand of affluence can be stretched forth to afford the comforts which the hour of sickness demands. If the typhus rage in Ireland, there is not for miles, perhaps, the hall of a proprietor to look to; and where there is, it is vacant; grass grows before its doors, and closed shutters say to the destitute, ‘No help have you here. My lord spends elsewhere the gold you have paid to his agent, and his wine-cellar is not to be invaded by a pauper.’ His claret flows freely midst the laugh of revelry, but may not retard the expiring sigh of some dying father of a helpless offspring. ‘Drain the cask dry for riot!’ cries the bacchanal, ‘and let the call of charity be echoed back by the empty barrel!'

“What can such a landlord hope for from his neglected serf? Is it to be expected that his

name will be heard with blessings and his person looked upon with attachment, or that the wholesome link between landlord and tenant can exist under such a state of things? No: they are not beings of the same community—man and the beast of the field are not more distinct than these two classes of people, and the time will come when the Irish landlord shall bitterly lament, that the only bond which held the peasant to his master, was his chain.

“ Be it your's to hasten this epoch, for all is ripe for change, because any change must be better for them ;—at least, no change can make them worse. Therefore are they brands ready for the lighting.

“ I told you of the comforts of a village in England. What is such a thing in Ireland? —an irregular jumble of mud-hovels, whose thatch has been so long without repair that its decomposition produces vegetation ; and you may see ragged cocks and hens feeding on the roof; a pig wallows on a dunghill before the door, (lucky when they have one !)—until a

starved cur, roused by some half (or whole) naked children, disturbs him from his place of enjoyment, and drives him for shelter into the house, whose mistress protects ‘the gintleman that pays the rint.’ I heard the saying of a ‘fool,’ or ‘natural,’ as they call idiots in this country, which amused me much for its graphic truth: his definition of a village was admirably given in four words,—‘Pigs, dogs, dunghills, and blackguards !’

“ The hovels of the Irish peasantry are not by any means so good as the stables of their masters’ horses. The lord of the soil would not let his hunter sleep in the wretched place he suffers his tenantry to dwell in, and for which he receives the rent that supports *him* in his wastefulness. Nor does he seek to better their condition; and if a murmur of discontent escape these ill-used people, they are branded with the foulest names, and the guilty party seeks, by heaping abuse and calumny on those whom he injures, to justify the conduct which has produced the very state of things of which he complains.

"I spoke of the English peasant-children playing at cricket, and remarked that the peasantry must be in a state of comfort who can afford to buy the materials of play for their offspring. What is the Irish game amongst the children? —an imitation of the manly exercise of hurling, which they call 'commons:' this is nothing more than driving a stone before them with a crooked stick, which is cut from any hedge that may afford it. The English children took off their clothes, to play: not so the Irish, and for the best reason in the world,—because they had no clothes to take off; they are nearly all in a state of nudity, and even when not quite uncovered, their wretched rags are almost worse than nakedness.

"It is impossible to conceive human nature reduced to so great a state of privation in every way as it is here; and even under all this privation they are merry, and I verily believe would be content, only they are goaded by insult and oppression into the bargain. The most active of their persecutors are the mon-

grel middle class to whom I alluded;—*Squires* they are called by the people. These fellows have not an idea beyond a dog, a gun, a horse, and the pleasures of the table. They are generally the descendants of Cromwell's or William's troopers, and, of course, are the fiercest upholders of the ascendancy which gives them all they have. But they are not even content with this: they must revile and malign the people whom their forefathers despoiled. They are the toad-eaters of those in power, to whom they bow, and from whom in return they get the refuse of the sops of which the ascendant party have the dispensing.

“ From this class are all the minor fry of government officers selected, and in their hands is the magistracy throughout the country vested. The consequence is, that the people have not the shadow of Justice to shelter under, much less her shield: the law of the land (so called), and as it is administered by this partisan magistracy, is not the poor man's friend, but his foe. So they are all ready to upset such a state

of things as soon as they can. Do not delay this epoch ;—I repeat it,—strike now, and Ireland shall be free !

“ There is everything ready to aid in the enterprise. In the North, the organisation is extensive, and arms and ammunition prepared ; and it is there, as Tone has recommended, I would advise the descent to be made.

“ The midland counties have a tolerably well-organised union also, and it has spread to the West. It is where I am at present, in the South, that there is less of preparation for revolt ; but the *spirit* to be free is everywhere, and they are all ready to rise the moment they have a force of disciplined troops landed, to form a nucleus round which they may gather.

“ Some time it will take, of course, to make them good soldiers ; but they are very quick, and in a cause in which their hearts lay would soon make available troops. The great requisites for a soldier they possess in a supereminent degree,—long endurance of fatigue and

fasting, and courage not to be surpassed by any nation under heaven.

“ In short, never was there a country more ready for revolution, nor more needing it. Everything is antagonised, everything in extremes: it is waste or want, raiment or rags, feasting or starvation. There is no middle to anything. The very column of society is broken—the capital and base alone remain: the shaft is shattered, and the two extremes are in ruinous separation.

“ If anything were wanting to complete this fearful state of things, it is this:—with these two parties, religion is a badge, and not a blessing; and they make their creeds, which profess peace, a war-cry.”

This letter De Lacy forwarded to France; and about a fortnight afterwards, he himself made a visit to Dublin, to consult with the chiefs of the revolutionary party on the necessity of having the organisation in a state of readiness for co-operation with the force from France which, he doubted not, his letter would hasten.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SHOWING HOW A GENTLEMAN MIGHT NOT DRESS HIMSELF
AS HE PLEASED FORTY YEARS AGO, IN IRELAND.

“ Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief.”

Othello.

For the wearing of the green,

For the wearing of the green,

’Tis a poor distressed country for the wearing of the green !

National Ballad.

ON communicating with the Central Committee in Dublin, De Lacy found all was in readiness to co-operate with a force landing from France. But, sanguine as were their expectations of aid from the republic, their disappointments had been so frequent, that, after some time had elapsed, they urged De Lacy to present himself in person to the Directory, and urge an immediate movement in their favour. “ Impatience,” said they, “ begins to manifest itself in some ;—despair in others ; and action becomes necessary. How many oppor-

tunities have been frustrated! —— While there was mutiny to a fearful extent in the English navy, our friends in the Texel could not give us aid, and thus a favourable occasion was lost ;—and now, when the recent victories and glorious peace France has achieved leave her free for action—now is the time to cripple Britain ! Should this moment be allowed to pass, we may never find another.”

Thus urged, De Lacy determined on acting in accordance with the views of the leading members of the United men, and returned to the South, to make the necessary arrangements with De Welskein for his being conveyed to France.

During De Lacy’s absence, the circumstances of the immediate region of our story were ripening into more serious action. “The plot was thickening,” as the romance readers say, and Rory was getting more and more into hot water.

The affair of the guard-room, and his *private* interview with the colonel, had spread amongst Regan’s set; and however De Welskein was an-

swered by De Lacy upon every charge he could bring against O'More, it was not such an easy matter to silence the murmurs of a parcel of prejudiced ruffians, whose personal dislike of our hero (because he was not of their set, and had thrashed their leader) rendered them impervious to every particle of evidence which they did not *choose* to believe.

At this time, too, they dreaded the approaching trial of Darby Daly, the man who had been arrested the same night as Rory. He was not only a smuggler, but a United man; and they feared, in case of a conviction, that he might "blab" to save himself. So, to prevent such a disagreeable result, and as the goal where he was confined was too strong to admit any hope of escape, it was determined that the awkward circumstances likely to result from a trial should be avoided, by putting the prosecutor and principal witness out of the way.

This was no less a person than "The Collector," Scrubbs; and how he was to be disposed of, was matter of consultation with De Wel-skein's party, who, being all liable to implica-

tion in the smuggling affair, were equally anxious to get rid of the collector. Now, “Soldering Solomon,” being a long-headed old fellow, and interested in the success of the smuggling, might help them in the matter; and as there was an appointment made for the following Sunday, when a certain “jollification” was to be held, at which most of the “set” were to be present, it was agreed to postpone the consideration of the collector’s fate until that day, when the tinker might assist in their councils.

In the mean time, De Lacy sought De Wel-skein, who promised to be ready to sail for France within the ensuing week. De Lacy urged an earlier departure; but as the smuggler said his lugger would not be off the coast until that time, his embarkation was of necessity delayed.

But an event soon took place which might have terminated fatally to De Lacy, and prevented any future voyages he projected. He had been in the neighbouring village, and was about to return, when a troop of yeomanry cavalry rode in and halted half-way up the street, opposite to M‘Garry’s, the apothecary’s, at whose

at whose shop the post-office was established. The troop had been under the inspection of the district general that day, and was then returning, when Solomon Slink, Esq. of Slinkstown, captain of the corps, halted his troop, as already stated, to inquire at the post-office if there were any letters for him. The captain was a violent person in his politics; one of those with whom it is not enough to support their own opinions, but to *knock down* those of everybody who thinks differently from themselves: and in those days, when on the side of authority so much could be done with impunity, such a person was prone to commit outrage on very trivial grounds.

It so happened, that as he rode up to M'Garry's shop, De Lacy was about to leave it, and was just upon the threshold as the captain was going to ask for his letters; but his eye was attracted by the green handkerchief which De Lacy wore, which, being the national colour of Ireland, was offensive to the sight of those who loved oppression better than their country; and so the captain, being

at the head of his corps, thought he could exercise a bit of loyal tyranny with safety.

Casting a ferocious look upon De Lacy, he said in the most offensive manner, "Why do you wear that green handkerchief?"

De Lacy was taken by surprise at the extraordinary insolence of the man, and the ultra intolerance that would interfere with the private right of dressing as one pleased. Before he could answer, the question was repeated with increased offensiveness.

"I believe, sir," said De Lacy, "I have as good a right to wear a handkerchief as you."

"Not a green one," said the captain.

"I'm not aware of any law against wearing green, sir," said De Lacy.

"I'll show you law for it!" said the other.
"Take it off, sir!"

"I shall do no such thing, sir."

"Won't you? Then if *you* don't, by G—d I will!"

"That you may do if you like, sir," said

De Lacy, folding his arms and drawing himself up to his full height.

The captain pressed his spurs to his horse's side, and plunging rudely upon De Lacy, he laid his hand upon the tie of his handkerchief, which he dragged from his neck and flung upon the ground, saying, "There's your d—d rebel green for you!"*

De Lacy grew as pale and cold, and *firm* too, as marble, at the brutal affront, and said to the yeomanry hero, with a tone of chilling mockery in his voice —

"Thank you!—And now, sir, after your polite attention to my toilet, may I beg the favour of your dismounting and walking into the fields with me? I see your holsters are provided with pistols, and two of your own gentlemen can arrange our ground."

"Arrange your grandmother!" said the polished captain. "Fight a rebel, indeed! I'd see you d—d first!"

"Then, sir," said De Lacy, "at the head

* Fact.

of your own corps, I tell you you're a coward!"

Captain Slink half drew his sword ; but his arm was arrested by the protestant clergyman of the parish, who fortunately was beside him, or perhaps De Lacy's life might have paid the forfeit of his temerity, in daring to object to this loyal aggression, and fling back insult for insult.

Having thus defied the captain without producing the desired result, De Lacy turned on his heel, and left him boiling with indignation at the epithet that had been flung in his teeth.

" Does any one know who the rascal is ? " said he.

" I know where the fellow lives," said the collector, who, as well as Sweeny, was one of the corps.

The captain, having received his letters from the post-office, the troop was again put in motion ; and on the road a long conversation took place between Scrubbs, Sweeny, and the commander, relative to De Lacy, on whom they

had always looked with a suspicious eye, and after whom they thought it necessary some inquiry should be made. "Never fear," said the captain; "I'll have a sharp eye on the chap."

While the lord of Slinkstown that evening was drinking his claret, he was seriously considering a letter he had just received, in which there was a passage arrested his attention, in connexion with the occurrence between him and De Lacy that day. It mentioned fears being entertained amongst the well-affected to the government, that emissaries from France were at work in Ireland; and the writer (who was an official in Dublin Castle) had heard some rumours of a suspicious person having been lately seen leaving Dublin in one of the southern coaches; and recommending to the captain vigilance about his district, in case questionable people might be observed.

At this period, though government had not any tangible evidence to go upon to prove a conspiracy, yet their fears were awake

upon the subject; and some arrests had been made on mere suspicion, even at this time, and their spies were on the alert in all quarters.

It will not, under these circumstances, be wondered at that the captain determined to see more about De Lacy, against whom not only his loyalty urged him to be hostile, but the insult which had been cast upon him so publicly: he therefore ordered a muster of the corps for the next day, and determined on arresting De Lacy.

That young gentleman pursued his road homewards after leaving the village, muttering desperate speeches all the way, and longing in his inmost soul to have a shot at the captain: but as that was clearly out of the question, he was obliged to be satisfied with calling him fifty thousand “ruffians” and “poltroons.” This relieved his mind considerably; and after swearing over about a mile of ground, he began to think that, after what had taken place, it was just as well he was leaving the country, where

to have remained without getting “satisfaction” would have “stuck in his gizzard,” as Lord Chesterfield says; so he was all impatience for getting to France, to hurry the expedition, that he might return and wreak his vengeance on all the yeomanry in Ireland for the insult he had received from the bully captain.

CHAPTER XXV.

SHOWING HOW A PASS MAY DEFEND A SOLDIER, AS WELL AS A SOLDIER DEFEND A PASS; AND HOW A MAN IN AUTHORITY MAY ORDER SABRES FOR ONE, WITHOUT ADMIRING PISTOLS FOR TWO.

THE morning after this untoward occurrence, De Welskein and De Lacy were in consultation in Rory O'More's cottage upon the projected trip to France. The smuggler anticipated that the Monday or Tuesday following would see the lugger upon the coast, and he appointed a place where De Lacy should be in readiness to embark. Before they had finished their conference, De Lacy's ear caught the sound of the approaching tramp of horses; and looking from the window, he saw the troop of yeomanry cavalry trotting down the *boreen*, with his friend

the captain at their head, flanked by Scrubbs and Sweeny.

Scrubbs never had forgiven De Lacy the liberal sentiments he expressed on the coach the day of his journey downwards; and Sweeny, whose indignation was great against Rory for the alteration of the tombstone, had a misgiving that this mysterious stranger had something to do with turning a loyal Protestant into ridicule. Therefore, both these gentlemen, independently of their duty to their captain and the good of the state, were very willing to join in a domiciliary visit to Rory O'More, and make an arrest upon his friend.

The moment De Lacy saw the yeomanry, he calculated some mischief was in the wind; and feeling that the presence of a foreigner under existing circumstances would bear an unfavourable interpretation against him, he opened the door to call for Rory, who, being always on the alert in cases of emergency, had his hand already upon the latch to warn De Lacy of the approach of the armed men.

"*He* must not be seen," said De Lacy, pointing to De Welskein. "Can you conceal him?"

"In a jiffey," said Rory. "Make haste, your sowl!" said he to the Frenchman; "come along here!" and he pulled the smuggler across the floor of the kitchen, to where, in a recess beside the fireplace, a kish used for holding turf stood; and Rory, in an instant emptying the turf from the basket, said, "Down with you, Divilskin, my darlin',—down on your marrow-bones!"

The Frenchman, though he did not understand his language, comprehended his meaning, and dropping on his knees, Rory inverted the kish upon him and covered him completely.

While all this was doing inside the house, the captain had his plans to put in practice outside: he completely surrounded the cottage with his men to prevent an escape, and then he swaggered into the house with his sword clattering at his heels, followed by Sweeny and Scrubbs.

De Lacy, apprehending that the women might

be alarmed and their agitation be productive of mischief, came forward to meet the captain and his supporters at once, that his presence might call off their attention from the widow and her daughter. Before they who came to seek him had time to ask a question, De Lacey said, "I rather think the honour of this visit is meant for me."

The captain at the first glance did not recognise him, for De Lacy had a dressing-gown on him at the time, as his coat had been wetted through that morning by a heavy shower of rain, and was hanging to dry at that moment before the kitchen fire; but on a second look, the yeomanry hero perceived it was his man, and said, "Yes, you are the person I want."

De Lacy, pointing politely to the door of his bed-room, whence he had stepped, said, "Will you do me the favour to go into my room?"

"Go on," said the captain; "we'll follow you."

De Lacy, bowing courteously and still pointing to the door, said, "After you, if you

please." And there was that influence in his manner which an air of politeness always bestows, that even the brutality of the squireen captain was not insensible to its power, and he and his satellites entered the room, followed by De Lacy, who closed the door.

"Gentlemen, pray be seated," continued he.

"There's no necessity,—our business here is very short."

"May I beg to know what *is* your business, sir?"

"That's just the question I was going to ask *you*.—I want to know who and what you are, and where you come from."

"I have yet to learn, sir, what authority you have for asking such a question."

"That's always the answer that people make who can't give a good account of themselves."

At this moment the door was opened, and Rory, putting in his head, said, "I beg your pardon, sir,—here's your coat :" and De Lacy saw in the expression of his eye that he had some meaning in his intrusion ;—so, going to the

door, he received the garment from Rory, who said in a whisper as he handed it to him, “The pass is in the pocket.”

De Lacy caught Rory’s idea on the instant, and begging pardon of his visitors, he threw off his dressing-gown and resumed his coat.

The moment that Rory had seen the captain enter the house, the thought struck him of the colonel’s pass being made an instrument of safety to De Lacy ; but how to put it into his possession was the question. Just then his eye caught the coat hanging before the fire ; and to get the pass from his box, put it in the pocket, and make De Lacy change his garment, was the work of a moment.

De Lacy felt for the pass, and when his fingers touched the precious slip of paper, he knew he possessed a talisman to paralyse the attempt made against him ;—so, assuming the most perfect composure, he muttered some common-place apology about his being found in dishabille, and again requested his visitors to be seated.

"You seem to take this very easy, sir," said the captain; "but it won't do,—I arrest you, sir;"—and he was advancing upon De Lacy, who retired rapidly a few paces, and seizing from a corner cupboard a case of pistols, he presented them upon his would-be captor, and said, "Dare to lay a hand on me, and you are a dead man!"

The captain paused, but said to Scrubbs and Sweeny, "Advance and seize him!"

But Scrubbs and Sweeny looked at De Lacy's pistols, and then at each other, and seemed to have no greater stomach for being shot than their commander.

"Don't be rash, gentlemen," said De Lacy; though indeed there seemed no great necessity for his caution, from the moment his pistols made their appearance. He laid down one of the weapons, and putting his hand into his pocket, drew forth the pass, which he presented to the captain, saying, "I suppose, sir, you know what *that* is?"

The captain was thunderstruck.

"What have you to say for yourself now, sir?" said De Lacy with cutting severity in his voice.

"Is that his writing?" said Slink, showing the pass to Scrubbs, who, he knew, was familiar with the character.

Scrubbs answered in the affirmative.

The captain handed back the pass, and mumbled some lame apology, in which, "very sorry,"—"a thousand pardons,"—"suspicious appearances,"—"strange times," &c. &c. were huddled together; "but how could he know?"

"You had better wait until you *do* know, next time, sir," said De Lacy, "and not pull neckcloths from unoffending persons for the future."

"For the occurrence of yesterday, I beg to offer you——"

"Pray say no more on that subject, sir. You affronted *me*, and I insulted *you*: if *you* are content, *I am*."

Captain Slink protested he was delighted to find he had been mistaken, and could not think

of harbouring any resentment against a loyal gentleman ; that he never was more surprised in his life,—“ he could not comprehend.”

“ I dare say, sir, there are many things above your comprehension,” said De Lacy : “ but, as a word of parting advice, I recommend you in future to abstain from aggressions on better men than yourself.”

“ Sir, I don’t see,” said the captain, “ why you should insinuate ——”

“ If you don’t like what I say, sir,” said De Lacy, “ there’s fair ground at the back of the house ; and here’s a case of pistols.”

“ By no means, sir,” said the captain : “ I didn’t mean *that* ; these are not times when loyal men should quarrel among themselves,” &c. &c. In short, the bully backed out.

Scrubbs and Sweeny were mute witnesses of this scene, which was equally astounding to them as their commander ; but just before leaving the room, Sweeny ventured to say in the most obsequious manner to De Lacy, (for the moment he showed the colonel’s pass, his high

tone overawed the whole three,) that he begged to ask him what his opinion was of Rory O'More.

"He is as worthy of trust as I am," said De Lacy.

"He has your confidence, then, sir?" said Scrubbs.

"Most implicitly, sir," said De Lacy.

Captain Slink in the mean time had made his exit, as Rory said, "like a dog without his tail;" and as soon as Scrubbs and Sweeny were in their saddles, he went to the right-about, rather crest-fallen at his two *subs* having witnessed his poltroonery in shying De Lacy's invitation to "pistols for two."

When the corps was fairly gone, Rory lifted the kish under which De Welskein was concealed, who emerged from his wicker ambush covered with the dust of the turf and cutting a comical figure. As he shook himself and slapped the particles of peat from his person, he grimaced, and ejaculated "*Sacré!*" continually, and seemed little satisfied with the

place which had been selected for his retreat ; but Rory assured him, as he helped him to clean himself, that he had increased his consequence by the transaction.

“ How is dat ? ” said the Frenchman.

“ Sure I made you a gintleman of the turf ! ” said Rory.

“ Rory,” said De Lacy, “ you ’re a capital fellow ;—give me your hand ! Your presence of mind on this occasion has saved us all.”

“ Oh, thin, if Scrubbs only knew how I came by the same pass ! ” said Rory. “ Faix, it ’s his own darlin’ rib that saved all the bones in our skins this day.”

“ It ’s your ready wit we may thank,” said De Lacy.

“ I beg your pardon,” said Rory. “ It isn’t *my* head, but Scrubbs’s, you ’re behowlden to.”

“ One thing is clear, however,” said De Lacy : “ I mustn’t stay here any longer. Should the affair of the pass get wind, they would be back on us immediately.”

"Thruenough," said Rory. "I thought so myself; but I didn't like to say it first;—it would look like wishing to get rid of you."

"Don't think so unworthily of me, Rory," said De Lacy, "as to suppose I could ever believe an ungenerous sentiment might find a place in your heart."

A council was now held between the parties as to the best mode of proceeding. It was agreed that De Lacy should proceed to the coast without delay; and this being decided on, he set about making his arrangements at once. Any English books he had, he set apart as a present for Mary; and calling her to his room, he begged her acceptance of them as a small testimonial of his sense of her care and attention during his dangerous illness. Poor Mary was quite overcome with this proof of his respect for her;—that she should have *his* books, —*the scholar's books*. It made her proud; but her pride was mingled with sorrow, that they were going to lose the society of this cultivated

person, whose presence in their cottage they looked upon as an honour, and whose courteous manners had won him their affection.

"Sure it's sorry we are you're goin', sir," said Mary.

"I regret it myself, Mary," said De Lacy. "I have found more pure and disinterested kindness under this roof than ever I met before, or may ever meet again in this wide world, and I shall never forget it; and when I come back to Ireland, which I trust will be soon, I shall not be long in the country without coming to see you all. Take these few books, Mary: your name is written in them with my own hand."

With these words, he gave the books to the girl, who was so touched by this last little mark of attention that she could not speak, and on receiving the present, a mute curtsy was all she returned, as she held down her head to hide the tears that were coming thick and fast; and before she reached the door, De Lacy heard her sobbing.

"Kind and sensitive people!" said he.

To the Widow O'More he begged in the most delicate manner to offer some gold, for all the trouble and expense he had caused ; but she would not listen to such a proposition. In vain he urged the propriety and justice of it—the widow was inexorable.

“ Sure, sir, a gintleman, as you are ;—and it is the *rale* gintleman you are, for it is the civil word and the kind word is always, and ever was, readiest with you ;—I say, a gintleman to live undher our humble roof, and be content with our humble ways, and never complain,—sure it is an honour you done us, and you wouldn’t think of affronting us now !”

“ Not for the world, my dear Mrs. O'More ;” and De Lacy took her hand and shook it warmly ;—“ but——”

“ Don’t say a word more, sir ; sure you said *dear* Mrs. O'More to me, as if I was a lady : and to have that said to me by *you*, sir,—sure it’s more than I desarve if I done twice as much for you ; sure that’s prouder return to me than all the goold I could tell ; and God

speed you, wherever you go, and send you safe ! and maybe we 'll see you agin,"—and she paused as she added—“or maybe we won't : they 're quare times, and sore times.” Here she closed the door. “Don't think me impudent, sir, nor prying, nor meddling ; but sure I can't help seein' what I see ;—“*it 's comin', it 's comin'*,—and it 'll be the sore day for poor Ireland ! But, sure, if it 's God's will, his blessed will must be done ! And there 's my darlin' boy, my Rory, and he in the thick of it ! and who knows but his precious life—and sure my own heart's blood is not as precious !——Oh, God ! Oh, God !”

De Lacy spoke soothingly to her and attempted to calm her.

“Don't think me foolish, sir ;—don't,—I 'm done now ; only I know of coarse it must be. Rory has the heart of a lion, though the gentleness of the lamb is in him too ; the good son and brother he is, I won't deny it : but he can't be kept off *that thing* ; he thinks it 's his duty to his counthry ; and sure that 's the manly part, and why wouldn't he be a man, though the poor

mother's heart sinks with fear? And I know you're great with him, sir: not that I blame you —don't think the like,—Rory would be jist the same if he never set eyes on you; and I'm proud in my poor thremblin' heart to think that my boy is worthy of that depindince."

"He's a noble fellow!" said De Lacy.

"God bless you for the words!" said she, weeping with contending emotions. "And you'll be at the head of it, I know; and it's the brave and the bowld leader you'll be, *for you're a gintleman*. And it's to France you're goin';—isn't it to France?"

"It is," said De Lacy, who could not at the moment have refused her the deepest confidence.

"And will they come soon?" said she eagerly.

"I hope so," said he.

"Oh, I wish it was over! I wish it was over! for my heart thrembles for my boy."

"Fear not," said De Lacy: "the truly brave are in less danger than the coward."

"Plaze God! plaze God!" said the mother.

"I hope soon to be back again," said De Lacy—"and at the head of my grenadiers;" added he, catching the enthusiasm of the mother, who gazed on him with an excited eye that gleamed through her tears. "I go to summon the victorious troops of France to your aid, and Ireland shall soon be free!"

The enthusiastic woman sunk upon her knees, and, with the earnestness of devotion in her manner, she said, "May the God of Heaven speed you, and watch over you and protect you, and guard you, and all them that fights the cause of the countrhy!" Her lips moved for a few seconds, as if in prayer; and marking herself with the sign of the cross, she arose from her knees, calmed by this outpouring of her feelings; then drying her eyes, and taking De Lacy's hands between her own, she raised her eyes to heaven, and saying fervently, "May God bless you!" left him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A SUBTERRANEAN MEETING.—THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF AN UNEXPECTED AGENT, THREATENING THE IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH OF DE WELSKEIN AND HIS PARTY.

THE Sunday arrived which had been appointed for the meeting of De Welskein and the smugglers in “The Folly.”

This was the name given to the ruins of an old, unfinished, rambling sort of edifice, which seemed to have been begun without a beginning, if one may say so, and never came to an end. The name is common to such sort of absurdities; and this is one of the follies not peculiar to the Emerald Isle,—for the same things, with the same names, exist in England.

In one of the vaults underneath the pile the smugglers used to meet, and the place was

peculiarly fitted for such secret purposes, from its extreme loneliness. The ruins stood in a romantic little valley, along whose abrupt declivities old thorn-trees wreathed their branches in fantastic forms, and gave out the perfume of their white blossoms when the year was young. A mountain stream, which had its source about a mile above the valley, tumbled about through the rocks of this wooded gorge with a wildness and frolic, characteristic of its recent birth: lower down its course, where its banks were fairer and flowers were growing, it circled about in eddying pools, as if loath to leave the pleasant places; and its bubbles and froth, and lingering amid beauty, resembled a riper age; — and at last to the plain it went. The dead level of the world reduced it to a quieter pace; and the rollicking stream settled down into a very smooth, deep, easy-going gentleman.

Close beside the building, this stream gave a spreading sweep, forming one of those pools already alluded to: it was one of the stages in the course of its existence, and pos-

sibly induced the projector of the Folly to pitch on this spot for his practice, from the beauty it bestowed upon the scene. This stream, however, was liable to sudden and violent floodings, from its mountain birth; and one of the corners of the ruin gave evidence that it reached a height and force sufficient to wear its flood-mark on the masonry. I will not say it had the reputation of being haunted, but, from its loneliness, it was a place rather avoided. The valley, perhaps, had been always lonely, but the old Folly made it appear more so;—for what gives so deep an aspect of desolation to any spot as the ruined and deserted tenement of man?

It was a lovely day in October; the sun was bright, and the clouds, in those large masses indicative of the season, were changing their grand and fantastic forms as they sailed across the sky before the fresh crisp breeze that rustled pleasantly among the trees, whose yellow leaves fell in golden showers to the brisker gusts of the wind.

A man with a dark brow, and downcast eyes, and heavy step, appeared on the edge of the hill that looked over into the valley, and paused on the summit. His appearance was in startling contrast to the scene around him; for *there* was the brightness and loveliness of earth, while he seemed overshadowed by the dark and horrible passions of a nether world.—It was Regan.

The second victory that Rory had gained over him had deepened his hatred to our hero to a fearful degree; in fact, had he dared to strike the blow, *murder* was not beyond him: but he had a coward conscience that quailed at the promptings of his bad heart. Still, however, he hatched minor projects of revenge, and thus was he employed as he stood on the acclivity above the valley. He was about to plunge down the side of the hill that led into the glen, when the faint tinkling of the chapel bell from the adjacent village came fitfully upon the wind, and the sound died away again. Regan stopped as if spell-bound, and

looked in the direction whence the sound proceeded. The sound to him was as a whisper to his conscience. Bad though he had become, a regular attendance at mass was one of the decencies of behaviour he had observed, and to-day was the first time he had ever neglected the duty. This may seem strange to the general reader, but to those who know how scrupulously the Irish peasantry attend public worship, it will not be deemed singular. Again the sound floated by him on the breeze; and there he stood listening to the bell as it sounded on his ear at intervals, with the shades of contending emotion passing across his countenance, and seemingly in a state of utter indecision, when a tap on the shoulder aroused him from his trance, and looking round, he saw the sharp eyes and sinister expression of old Solomon the tinker fastened upon him.

“ How many grains goes to a bushel o’ whate ? ” asked Solomon.

“ What do you mane ? ” replied Regan.

"Can't you tell me?" repeated the tinker.

"How should I know?" said Regan sullenly.

"Why, you appeared to be in sitch a deep study, that I thought you wor makin' the calculation," said Solomon dryly.

"Oh, thin I wasn't," said Regan with a long-drawn and heavy sigh: "I was strivin' to remember something I forgot."

Again the chime of the bell visited his ear, and Regan's look involuntarily answered the sound.

The tinker fastened his keen eye on him, and guessing at Regan's startled conscience, he read his thoughts in an instant, and with a backward twitch of his shrivelled thumb over his shoulder towards the village, he said, "Forgot! — I suppose you forgot *to go to mass!* — ho, ho, ho! What a loss you are to the flock this day! — what'll Father Kinshela do without you?"

"None o' your humbuggin', Sol." said Regan.

"Is it *me* humbug?" said the tinker with a

sneer, as if rejoicing in the power he affected to disclaim. “ Come along, man ; we’re late enough. Never mind chapel to-day ; the chapel will wait till next Sunday. Don’t you know what Punch said ? — ‘ Devil may care,’ says Punch when he lost mass ; ‘ I’ll be in time for church.’ ” And so saying, the tinker led the way to the valley, and Regan followed in silence.

Within the vaults of the Folly the smugglers were assembled for some time, and were sitting round a rude table formed of three or four planks laid across a couple of large stones, whereon some greybeards filled with brandy stood, one of which was making the circle of the board, and lowering fast in spirits while it raised those of the company. Standing beside a large pot which was suspended over a turf fire appeared De Welskein, who was busy in cooking the contents of the cauldron,— and amongst his various avocations it will not be wondered at that a Frenchman enjoyed the mysteries of the *cuisine* ; but at the same time, while he

attended to his culinary cares, he took his share of the conversation—and the brandy also.

"Monsieur Reggan not coame yait?" said De Welskein. "He go to shappel, I soopose—ha, ha! G—d d—n fool! no philosophie, too fond of prieste. What good for prieste? for nussing, bote demself—to kesh ten peegs."

"It's not the priest, but the parson gets the pigs," said one of his companions.

"All de sem!" said De Welskein contemptuously,—"all de sem! one prieste sem as nudder prieste—all homebogue: prettee feeshe in a keettel."

"A kittle o' fish, you mane, I suppose."

"Yais—keettel feesh—das it."

Regan and Solomon now made their appearance, and were questioned as to the cause of their delay, for they were the last of the party.

"Me know ver well wisout ax," said De Welskein.

"Meester Solsodderman," which was his version of Sawdering Solomon, "he not like to

laif de 'ouse vere he sleep las nise visows his
brekfas dees morneeng — ha, ha !”

“ Small blame to me !” said Solomon, while
the others laughed at this touch of De Wel-
skein’s knowledge of Solomon’s character.

“ And for Monsieur Reggan,” said the smug-
gler, “ he go to shappel and coos not come
before.”

“ No, I didn’t go to *shappel*, ” answered
Regan.

“ He was only thinkin’ of it,” said Solomon.

“ Ah ! you never love libérts while you love
de prieste.”

“ Maybe he thinks it’s betther be off with
the owld love before he’s on with the new,”
said Solomon.

“ *Vous avez raison*, ” said the Frenchman
triumphantly : “ off wid dem, off wid dem all,
prieste and prance !— Bote coame — seet down ;
time for see vaut to do wis Mister Collectere.
— Here, Darbee, ” said he to a red-haired ruffian
who was near the fire, — “ here ! you wash dis
paut wile me mek comeetay of poobleek sefty.”

So saying, he handed his ladle to Darby, and joined the council, who were already muttering amongst each other their notions of what was the best means of silencing the collector.

"We must get rid of him somehow," said Regan.

"Sartinly," said a fellow called Jack Flannerty.

"But what's the best way of doin' it?" asked a third.

"Send him over the *say* in munseer's ship," said a fourth.

"Ver good," said De Welskein. "He may spik mosh as he like in France!—ha, ha!—safe 'nuff dere!"

"Give him a dog's knock at wanst!" said Jack Flannerty.

"Dead men tell no tales," said Solomon sententiously, and with a diabolical expression about his eyes and mouth: and immediately after, addressing the man who was in charge of the boiling pot, whose attention had been attracted by the last proposition, he said,

"Darby *avic!* mind the pot, or our dinner will be spylte."

"Wash de paut, I tell you."

"Darby's no great cook," said Solomon: "but you know the owld saying—God sends mate, but the devil sends cooks."

"By gar, den, me send Darbee back to him."

"Afther you is manners, sir," said Darby.

"But," said Flannerty, "what do yiz say to knockin' out his brains?"

"How do you know he has any?" said Solomon.

"He has enough to hang Darby Daly, anyhow."

"I don't like murdher," said Regan.

"Don't you?" said Flannerty, looking at him contemptuously. "Do you think he'd *hant* you?"

"Maybe you wouldn't like to see a ghost yourself," said Regan, who was not pleased with the tone of Flannerty's address.

"Bah! nonstence!" exclaimed De Welskein.

"Dead men tell no tales," croaked Solomon again.

"Ay, but murdher spakes out," said Regan : "it's always discovered one way or the other." This was the *true* cause of Regan's objection to the measure.

"Wouldn't sendin' him over the *say* do as well?" said the former proposer of that measure.

"I think it would," said Regan ; "and if you'd take my advice, I know another you'd send along wid him."

"Who?" was asked by all.

"A black thraitor that 'll hang every man of us, if we don't take care."

"Is it Rory O'More you mane?" said one.

"How aisy you hit it," said Regan, "without my tellin' you! — it's a sign there 's thruth in it."

"Settle one thing at a time," said Flannerty. "I know you hate Rory ; but that's no rayson you're to disturb us with it always. Settle about Scrubbs first."

"*Bon,*" said the Frenchman. And it was soon

decided by the majority of opinions that to transport the collector was the safest course to pursue: and that being agreed upon, it next became matter of consideration how he was to be secured.

In the midst of this consultation De Welskein kept a sharp eye to the fire, to see if Darby was minding his business. He caught him still attending more to the matter in debate than the cooking. “*Bête!* vill you mind de paut? or, by gar, you let ‘im run over de way.”

“ By my sowl, it couldn’t do that if it had twice as many legs,” said Darby.

“ Mr. New Jane,” said Solomon to De Welskein, whose name of *Eugene* was thus Hibernicised, “ will you take the collecther wid you, thin?”

“ Certanlee! you kesh him for me, and me mek gentilman of ‘im — tek ‘im too traavel.”

“ The pot is busy bilin’,” said Darby, who wished his guard over the culinary department to be ended.

“ Well, don’t let it *run over the way, avic,*” said Solomon, quizzing De Welskein.

To the low laugh that followed, the Frenchman replied, “*Vieux chaudronnier de campagne*, you mek ghem auf me — old rog ! *Sacré !* tek care you get no dinnaire, mebbe, — how you lik dat ? ha, ha !”

De Welskein now resumed his culinary cares, and the dinner was pronounced ready for discussion. No time was lost in lifting the pot from the fire ; and in a few minutes the dinner was placed on the board, and all were preparing to make a vigorous attack upon it, when Solomon said in a tone of mockery, “Oh, you haythens ! why thin would you begin to ate without sayin’ grace ?” and he arose as if to give a benediction.

“*Sacré nom de diable !*” said the Frenchman ; “vaut you do, you old fool ?”

“I’m goin’ to say grace,” said Solomon, winking at the rest of the party ; and raising his eyes, with a sanctimonious air, he said in mock solemnity,

“One word’s as good as ten ;
Leather away, — amen !”

The Frenchman joined in the laugh that Solomon's old and brutal joke produced, and exclaimed, “Old homebogue! *sacré chaudronnier de campagne!*” as he attacked his own stew, which was not long in being demolished, and the table was soon clear of everything but the brandy-bottle, which still continued to make its rounds.

“And now, this bein’ Sunday,” said the tinker, “I brought the good books wid me for our edification:” and he pulled from his pocket a greasy pack of cards, whose rounded corners and nearly obliterated faces bore testimony to the many contests in which they had been engaged.

This movement of Solomon’s was received with welcome by the whole party, and a game was immediately called for. The game they played was one which has long been a favourite in Ireland, and still continues to be so amongst the peasantry. It is called “five and ten” when played between two persons, or four engaged as partners; but when a larger number is

enlisted, it is called “*spoil five*,” and a *poule* is played for. The same cards are influential in both games, though a totally different play is required in one from the other ; for in the former, the object is to win as many tricks as you can, while in the latter your own hand, if not sufficiently strong to secure triumph, is always sacrificed to the common good of “*spoiling*” the endeavours of a more fortunate holder of cards, and thereby increasing the *poule* :—hence its name of “*spoil five*.” But in either form, this game is a great favourite with the peasantry, and is played by them with considerable skill : there is a remote resemblance between it and *écarté*, which is much the inferior game of the two, and though “*spoil five*” does not bear the stamp of fashion, it requires more acuteness in playing than many other games I have seen.

“ Sol. the dale is yours,—it’s only fair, since you brought the cards, my boy,” said Flannerty ; “ so let us see who ’ll play. We ’re too many for ‘five and ten,’ so we must have the ‘*spoil five*.’

There's too many of us for that same to play all at wanst ; but we must begin, anyhow, and we can change hands by turns. Come—there's Solomon, and myself, and—”

“—And the munseer, of coorse,” said Regan.

This proposition was not relished by the company, evidently ; for the Frenchman's adroitness with the pack was no secret to them, and they, very naturally, did not wish to engage with such an adversary ; though no one liked to speak out his objection, and the foreigner with great readiness, at once interposed his own denial to such a proposal.

“ No, no,—muss not play—cars do for me whatever he please me—so my honner is not satisfy ; for dough you know *parfaitement* I woos not play my treeck wis my frens, for dat all de same my honner woos not be happy.”

“ We're much obleeged to your honour,” said Flannerty : “ to be sure, we know you're a gentleman every inch o' you.”

“ *Oui ! oui !* ” said the Frenchman proudly.

“ Sure enough, 'faith,” said Flannerty, “ it is

we that are the rale gintlemen, for we have little work and a grate dale o' pleasure. But come, make up the game." This was soon done, and they commenced play with much spirit.

Now, the Frenchman in relinquishing a part in the game served two purposes. In the first place, it gave his companions the notion that his own sense of propriety forbade his engaging in it; and in the next, it left him at liberty to go round the board and see all the hands, and then communicate by concerted signal the best play to Solomon, who was his confederate in his system of plunder on their associates ; the old saying of "honour among thieves" holding as good in this instance as in most others.

On went the game. Whenever Solomon held a hand of sufficient force to need no aid, the Frenchman kept beyond reach of the gamesters, the better to screen his purpose ; and whenever the tinker's cards were so weak as to render finesse of no avail, he would stand be-





hind him and say as some card was played “Ha! dat is not goot.”

“How do you know?” the tinker would cry in affected displeasure.

“Me know ver well.”

“Not you in throth—go tache your mammy to milk ducks! I know more o’ ‘spoil five’ than all the Frinchmen that ever was born. Play!” said he to his fellow-gamesters! “Hello! the five fingers! by dad I’m done! Well, the game’s spylte, anyhow. Dale, Regan.”

The cards were distributed again, and Solomon having the ace of trumps, put out a weak card from his hand to take in the trump card in its place, saying, as is customary, “I rob.”

“By my sowl, you have been doin’ that ever since we sat down a’most!” said Flannerty. “I dunna how you conthrive to win so often!”

“When you play as long as I have played, *ma bouchal*, you’ll not wondher,” said Solomon, very quietly taking the turned-up trump card

from its place on the pack. "That's nothing to what I can do. Give me a dhrop o' brandy, munseer, as you 're idle."

The Frenchman handed him the bottle, saying at the same time, "wat is dat you say abous nussing?"

"I say that is nothing to what I can do," said Solomon, who put the bottle to his mouth and took a copious swig.

"*Ma foi!* everyting in dis world is nussing," said the Frenchman—"nussing at all."

"Oh, be aisly with your larning, munseer," said Flannerty.

"Bote I say dat is true," repeated the Frenchman: "all de univer is nussing."

"And am I nothing?" asked Solomon.

"Nussing at all," said the Frenchman.

"And is this nothing?" again he asked, holding up the jar of brandy.

"Nussing at all: everyting is nussing."

The old tinker put the jar to his mouth, and finishing the remaining spirit that was in it, he withdrew it from his lips, saying, "Well, take

nothing from nothing, and nothing remains ;" and he held up the inverted bottle amid the laughter of his companions.

On went the game, and the laughing and the drinking and the cheating, until a dead pause was produced amongst the noisy group by a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a loud peal of thunder, which suddenly interrupted their revelry. The laugh was silenced, the winning card upheld in the suspended hand of the gamester, and the flask arrested in its progress to the lips of the bacchanal ; looks of wonder tinged with terror were exchanged amongst the listeners, and while they were yet fear-bound, another flash gleamed through a narrow grating which admitted a small portion of light and air to the vault, and its white and vivid glare made the dull red blaze of the fire they sat near seem more lurid. The gang, to an imaginative mind, might have seemed like a troop of unholy spirits round a watchfire of the nether world.

" God be good to me !" said Regan, dropping

the cards from his hand; “did you ever see anything like that! I’ll play no more—it’s not good to play on a Sunday;” and he arose.

“ Bah! don’t be fool,” said the Frenchman, who was the most unconcerned of the party, and who assumed to be more unconcerned than he really was; “you no philosophe—tonzer and loightening is nussing but natture. You no frighten at de sun, and de moon, and de star, which is natture as well as de tonzer: you might as well be fright for de watter you drink as de tonzer.”

Another tremendous peal silenced the babbling of the Frenchman, who, when the lessening reverberations died away, said in a very altered tone, “Dere is gret shange in de wedder.”

Regan had ascended from the vault when he left his game, and on gaining the ground story of the building and looking forth, he beheld a great change indeed from the aspect the scene had worn when he descended from the

hill-top a short time before. One of those sudden storms peculiar to the season had come on; the heavens were dark, the forked lightning only dispelling the gloom with terrific and momentary brightness, the rain falling in that deluging profuseness characteristic of such elementary commotion, and the frolic stream that ran through the valley becoming a raging torrent. He returned to his companions, and had scarcely descended the ladder which led to the vault, when a crash rang over the vaulted roof: there was no mistaking the sound—it was evident the building had been struck by lightning, and every one who yet held his cards flung them down and sprang to his feet, and looks and exclamations of terror burst from the gang.

"Let us lave the place," said Regan; "it's onlooky."

"We're safer here than anywhere else," said Solomon, he and De Welskein being the only persons who retained their self-possession,

though the withered face of the old tinker was paler than ordinary.

"Ver true, *mon ami*," said the Frenchman: "come—come round de fire, and tek some bran-dee. Gret shange in de wedder, by gar!"

"I never seen sitch rain in all my days," said Regan, who bore a particularly troubled aspect. "And to think of sitch terrible thundher bein' so late in the saison! I always heer'd it was onlooky to play cards on Sunday; and I never missed mass before!"

"Bah!" said the Frenchman; "mebbe you better go to shappel now."

"I wish to the Lord I heer'd mass to-day!" muttered Regan, whose superstitious nature operated powerfully upon him.

Another peal of thunder followed.

"You hear *that*, don't you?" said Solomon.

Regan marked himself with the sign of the cross, and muttered the formula of blessing himself. "Isn't it wondherful, sitch dhreadful claps o' thundher in October?"

"Not at all," said Solomon: "the heaviest

thundher-storm ever was in my memory fell on a Christmas day."

"It's rainin' as if heaven and earth was comin' together," said Regan.

"Don't you be 'fraid of dat," said De Welskein; "de 'eaven and de ert stay were dey are; —tek some brandee."

Some sods of turf were thrown upon the fire to increase it, and the party stood round the hearth in silence, awed by the increasing storm and the fearful glare of the lightning; but instead of the fire showing symptoms of reviving under the fuel cast upon it, a low hissing sound gave warning it was assailed by moisture, and in a few minutes the whole floor of the vault was covered with water. The river had risen to a fearful height, and a rapid flooding of this subterranean apartment was the consequence. There was no choice left now, and the party simultaneously moved towards the ladder that led to the upper part of the Folly: but a cry of horror burst from the lips of the first man who gained the accustomed opening,

when he found it was completely blocked up by the fallen masses of the building the lightning had smitten.

A scene of terror and confusion now arose which no language could describe. Even De Welskein, though hitherto heeding not the elementary commotion, was not proof against such solid evidence of it as the tons of fallen masonry that choked the only passage from the vault; and Solomon shared the fear in common with the rest. Regan was the most furious of the set; and while the amount of terror which the thunder excited only made him pray, the increase of it, which the horrible fate that seemed to await him produced, made him curse.

"May the divil resave you, you owld villain!" said he to Solomon; "what made you bring me here at all? I was going to mass, only for *you*."

"*Me* bring you!" said Solomon; "no, you chicken-hearted murdherer—for you *would* be if you *dar*—it was the bitther hate brought you here. You kem to get Rory O'More out o' your

sight ; but you'll get more wather than you like, yourself, before him, — and hell's cure to you !”

“ G—d d—n ! why do you curse for ?” said De Welskein, who now thought of trying to escape at the grated window.

He induced them to come down the ladder, that he might rear it against the aperture ; and having done so, he ascended rapidly. But the grating was too narrow to admit a man to pass, and too strong and firm to be shaken in a hurry : in the mean time the water was rising fast, the men being already knee-deep.

“ Pull him down out o' that,” said Regan ; “ and let us get up the laddher agin to the door ! We'll have room enough to stand up there, and not be dhrownded like rats. Pull him down !”

“ *Silence, poltron !* ” said De Welskein. “ You poor cow's-heart ! G—d d—n ! let ladder 'lone ; lissen, all you, lissen !”

He desired that the stones on which the planks had rested to form their dinner-table, and those which had served for seats also, should

be rolled over near the wall, where, by piling them one on another, a foundation would be formed on which to rest one end of a plank, while the other extremity might be supported higher up on the ladder ; that thus they might be preserved from drowning, while they could be at the same time near the window, at which they could work alternately with their knives till the iron grating was loosened, and their egress effected.

This plan was immediately acted upon, though terror still prevailed amongst them. Solomon was one of the first to follow the Frenchman's advice ; and as he approached the table of planks, he saw the stakes of the deserted game lying untouched : even in such a moment the ravening appetite for the coin could not be repressed ; — he pounced upon the money and made it his own :—daring to play the robber even on the brink of eternity. Regan was the only one who perceived him, and he had not courage enough to speak out ; but in his heart he wondered at and cursed the undaunted old miscreant.

The water continued to gain rapidly upon them, and they had no time to spare in making the proposed arrangement for their safety. When it was completed, there was a dispute who should occupy the highest point on the plank; and the terrible example of selfishness and ruffianism exhibited, would only disgust were it recorded.

It was an awful scene ! There were those whose lives were in jeopardy to whom an unprepared call to a final account would have been fearful ; and yet, amongst them there was less of prayers than curses.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DE LACY DEPARTS FOR FRANCE.—RORY GIVES A HINT FOR MAKING GOOD PUNCH; AND SCRUBBS PROVES THE FALSENESS OF THE SAYING, THAT A MAN FINDS HIS WARMEST WELCOME AT AN INN.

THE same day that was appointed for the meeting of the smugglers in the Folly was destined for the departure of De Lacy from the cottage of Rory O'More.

De Lacy had his misgivings whether it would be safe for Rory to remain in the country after what had happened, and feared that his ready and generous conversion of the colonel's pass to his friend's safety might become the means of his being discovered by the colonel and his party, and marked out for their vengeance. This thought weighed heavily upon him, and he expressed to Rory his fears upon the subject, with an offer of making him the compa-

nion of his voyage, and so securing his safety : but Rory refused the offer with thankfulness for the kindness and consideration by which it was prompted, and declared his intention to remain.

“ Sure, what would the mother and Mary do without me ? ”

This was his only, and (with him) unanswerable argument against the measure ; so, in conclusion, it was agreed that De Lacy should make his voyage without the companionship of our hero.

“ I'll go with you to see you off, though,” said Rory.

“ No, Rory,” said De Lacy : “ if you will not bear me company altogether, you must not in part. As you are determined on remaining behind, it would be a still further presumptive evidence against you to be absent even for a day or two from your home.”

It was therefore agreed that a couple of horses should be hired in Knockbracken, and Conolly, instead of Rory, become De Lacy's

guide to the coast. Knockbracken happened to be the village on Regan's side of the country; for that in the neighbourhood of O'More's was too insignificant to produce a horse for hire.

The parting of De Lacy from the cottage was painful to all parties — they did not know how much so, until the moment came. The women cried, and De Lacy was silent—a kindly pressure of the hand of the mother and daughter was the last parting testimonial of friendship he gave them; and as he hurried from the quiet little lane, the widow and Mary sent after him many a fervent blessing.

Rory accompanied him as far as the point whence he was to take horse, and they wended their way thitherward in comparative silence. The approach of the parting hour is saddening; and the thoughts which in happier moments we give to the tongue, the heart refuses to part with then.

On reaching the hostel of the "Black Bull," the nags of Larry Finnegan were put in requisition; and while Conolly went to assist in their

preparation for the road, De Lacy kept Rory for the few last words.

"Rory," said he, "the kindness I have met under your mother's roof I can never forget, and *your* courage and conduct have been beyond all praise."

"Don't mintion it, if you plaze, Mr. De Lacy."

"I should be ungrateful if I did not," said De Lacy. "Now, your mother, Rory, would not permit me to make her any acknowledgment; but ——"

"Murdher, murdher! don't distress me!" said Rory.

"Listen to me, Rory," said De Lacy.— "Though your mother has refused anything in the shape of remuneration, you, I hope ——"

"Is it me!" said Rory.

"Now, *do* listen to me!" said De Lacy. "Surely you won't refuse some trifling gift from your parting friend as a keepsake?"

"Oh! a keepsake," said Rory, "is another affair."

" That's a good fellow !" said De Lacy.
" Here, then — take this, and keep it for my sake," and he drew forth a gold watch.

Rory kept looking at the watch and De Lacy alternately in wonder, and at last said,
" Why, thin, is it a watch !"

" Yes."

" And a *goold* watch !"

" Yes : what's so wonderful about it ?"

" Is it *me* with a *goold* watch ! — By dad ! you might as well see a pig with a cocked hat !"

" But as a keepsake, Rory ?"

" Oh, something less costly than *that*, if you plaze, Mr. De Lacy : sure, that's worth a handful o' guineas. And thin, what's more, sure I've no use for a watch : there's the blessed sun that rises and sets evermore ; and if I want to know the time o' day, I've only to cock up my eye at him, and I can tell it a'most as well as if he was a clock — beggin' his pardon for comparin' him to the like — but all as one, I mane, in the regard of the hour."

"But, Rory, it is not for use, but as a keepsake, I wish you to take it."

"Sure, anything else will do as well for a keepsake: give me that switch out o' your hand, and I'll value it as much as all the watches ever was made."

"That's too insignificant, Rory—indeed it is: think of something else."

"Well, then, sir, since you desire me to say the thing myself and *will* have it so, there's your sleeve-buttons; and if you give them to me, it is proud I'll be to wear the same things on me that you yourself wore."

"There," said De Lacy, taking them from his wrist—"and I only regret they are so worthless a gift."

"Ah, sir! it is the giver, and not the gift, I think of," said Rory.

Conolly now led forth the horses saddled; and though neither the beasts nor their furniture were much to be admired, De Lacy was assured the rough hacks would do him good service: so, mounting into a very old high-pommelled

saddle, he once more shook hands with Rory, and bidding him an affectionate farewell, with the hope of a speedy and triumphant return, he took the road towards the coast and was soon beyond the village.

Rory then went to chapel; and thoughts of the expedition and hopes for his country mingled with his devotions, and a prayer for the safety of the friend from whom he had just parted, rose sincerely from his heart. Mass being over, he returned to the "Black Bull," where the host, Larry Finnegan, was serving his customers with tobacco and drink.

"I'm come to ax you for something, Larry," said Rory.

"And you shall have it with pleasure, my buck," said Larry. "What would you like? I've a fresh tap here, and it's iligant."

"Nothing in that way, Larry, to-day; but I jist came to see if you're done with the crowbar I lint you some time agon, as I'm in want of it myself to quarry some stones to-morrow."

"Yis ; there it is, standin' over in the corner
beyant the hob in the kitchen forinst you :
I'm done wid it,—many thanks to you!"

"Why, thin, what would you want wid a
crow-bar, Finnegan ?" said one of his customers.

"Oh, it's the misthiss you should ax about
that," said Rory.

"Why, is it for batin' her he got it?"

"No," said Finnegan. "It's a flail I have
for that."

"It is *Misthiss* Finnegan that wants it,"
said Rory ; "and I wondher you never heer'd
the rayson."

"Why, thin, what is it, Rory, my boy ? I'll
be bound it's a quare one you'll give, anyhow."

"You see," said Rory, "she makes the
punch so sstrong, that she bent all her spoons
sthrivin' to stir it; and so she borrowed the
crow-bar."

"Long life to you, Rory, your sowl !" said
Finnegan, who relished this indirect compliment
to the character of his establishment.
"Devil be from me, but you won't lave the

house this day without takin' a tumbler with the misthiss, afther that!—and she shall mix it herself for you—and *with the crow-bar*, my boy!"

Rory would not refuse the hospitality offered, so, entering the kitchen, he sat by the fire; and Mrs. Finnegan endeavoured to support the character he had given her, by brewing one of her best, and she returned to the kitchen in smiles to present to Rory a "screeching" tumbler of punch.

While he was sitting there, chatting, and sipping his beverage, the storm noticed in the foregoing chapter began to threaten, and soon burst in all its violence over the village. The women blessed themselves; and the mirth and noise of the public-house sank before the peals of thunder which rolled above them. Rory, remembering he had some miles to walk before he should reach his home, went to the door to look out, and judge if the storm seemed but a sudden burst, or threatened a longer duration; and in the angry aspect of the skies

he saw nothing but the alternative of a long wait in the village or a wet skin before him. As he looked up the street, Scrubbs was riding down the road at a furious pace to get under shelter ; but before reaching the "Black Bull," a vivid flash of lightning made his horse start violently, and the suddenness of the action brought horse and rider to the ground.

"God bless us!" exclaimed Rory.

"What's the matter?" said some bystanders within the house, who had not seen the occurrence.

"I b'lieve the Collecther is kilt with a stroke o' lightning!"

A universal exclamation of "God bless us!" echoed Rory's first ejaculation, and the people crowded to the door to look out.

Scrubbs, who was only stunned by the fall, now made an effort to rise ; and Rory in a moment ran to his assistance and was by his side.

"You're not kilt?" said Rory.

"No," said Scrubbs.

"Are you scorched itself?"

The fall of Scrubbs rendered him as yet unconscious of the meaning of the question.

“By dad!” said Rory, “I thought you wor kilt with the lightning! Come into the house out o’ the rain.” And so saying, he led Scrubbs to the “Black Bull.”

Some others went to the assistance of the horse, but it was found the animal had slipped its shoulder and could not rise without help. This being afforded, the poor brute limped along to the stable of the hostel.

After a few minutes the Collector was quite recovered, having escaped with a few bruises; and his own safety left him at liberty to lament over the mishap of his steed, to whose stable he repaired, exclaiming as he went, “It’s very unfortunate!”

“ ‘Faith, it is unfortunate,’ said Finnegans, “that your neck wasn’t bruk!—I’d like to dhrink at your wake.”

“Oh, God forgive you, Larry!” said the wife; “why would you be wishin’ the man’s death?”

“Bekase there would be a blackguard the

less in the world : sure, he got me fined, come Candlemas next a year ; and you know it."

" Throth, he 's a dirty blackguard, I know," said the polite Mrs. Finnegan : " so lave him to God."

" To the devil, you mane," said Finnegan.

" Thru for you, by my sowl, Larry," said some of the bystanders, who all hated Scrubbs most cordially.

" I wondher he didn't keep a tight hand over the baste !" said one.

" Faix, so do I !" said another ; " for he keeps a mighty tight hand over everybody else."

" Sure enough," said a third, " it 's he that 's the rale grinder."

" Whisht ! here he comes back, bad cess to him !" said the former speaker, as Scrubbs re-entered the house.

But the man who dubbed him a grinder, though he did not *speak* the word, continued to *sing* the nickname in the Collector's face ; and he hummed to a lilting tune —

“Tarry, heigh-ho !
You *know*
Tarry, heigh-ho ! the *grinder* :”—

and a low laugh and furtive glances exchanged among the peasants, made Scrubbs feel very uncomfortable, for he suspected they bore some allusion to himself.

There was not one voice to express sorrow for his accident, nor congratulation upon his escape, so disliked had he made himself in the country ; and but for Rory O'More, whose generous heart was open to the distress even of a foe, he would not have had a single being to do him a service.

Scrubbs wished to push homewards, and asked Finnegan to let him have a horse on hire.

“I haven’t one,” said Finnegan.

“You’ve two, you mean,” said Scrubbs.

“They’re both engaged,” said the landlord.

“I’ll pay you whatever you ask,” said Scrubbs.

“I tell you, I haven’t thim,” said Finnegan

gruffly ; and he added in an under tone, “ and if I had, you shouldn’t have him.”

“ Do you mean they are both engaged ?” said Scrubbs.

“ Yis,” was the short answer.

The storm continued to rage on. The public-house, whose noisy mirth was quelled by its outbreak, seemed to have gathered an additional gloom from the presence of the Collector. One by one the customers of the “ Black Bull ” dropped off : those who lived in the village, first ; who could make a run through the storm to their homes ; those in the vicinity, next ; and, at last, when there seemed no chance of its abatement, even they whose homes were more distant seemed to think there was no use in longer tarrying, and so, wrapping their frieze-coats round them, burying their faces in their collars, and pulling their *caubeens* tightly over their eyes, they one by one made for the door, and balancing themselves for a moment on the threshold between a wait or a wetting, they butted with their

heads against the wind, and “pelted” away through the storm.

Rory and Scrubbs were the only guests left within the walls of the “Black Bull,” and Rory seemed, at last, inclined to follow the example of those who departed. On expressing this intention, Scrubbs manifested great uneasiness, for he did not like remaining alone in the public-house, whose landlord he had mulcted in a fine on some trivial pretext; and the savage manner of the man, added to the consciousness of the cause he had given him for dislike, made Scrubbs loath to become a solitary lodger in the deserted inn.

When he found Rory determined to go, and that his way was homewards, he expressed a desire to accompany him, for their road lay together, and it was matter of great importance to the Collector to have a companion,—for to travel the country alone *on foot* was what he dreaded too much to venture upon, and considered even more hazardous than remaining where he was.

A few days before, he would not have chosen Rory for a companion ; but the circumstances of the intended arrest of De Lacy had mystified him, and made him imagine that perhaps Rory was not the dangerous person he had taken him for ; and at all events, under existing circumstances, he could not but be glad of his convoy : so, declaring himself ready to face the road on foot with our hero, and thanking Finnegan, whose care of his horse's shoulder he urged, Rory said “ Good-b'ye !” to the landlord of the “ Black Bull ” and his punch-making wife, and, not forgetting his crow-bar, sallied forth from the snug shelter of the warm hostel to buffet the chilling storm which still raged with unmitigated fury.

They proceeded in silence until they passed the skirts of the village ; when Rory, turning from the high road, struck into a path through the fields that lay beside it.

“ Where are you going, O'More ?” said the Collector.

“ A short cut,” said Rory.

"Don't go through the fields," said Scrubbs : "the road is safer."

"Why, what danger do you dhread in the fields ?" said Rory.

"Only, the road is safer ; the fields are so lonely," said the Collector.

"Maybe you 're afeard o' me, Misther Scrubbs ?" said Rory.

"No, no, my dear O'More !"

"Bekaze you may go back to the 'Black Bull' if you are. I didn't ax your company ; and high-road or bye-road is all one to me."

"Now, O'More, I beg your pardon, --don't be offended—but indeed these bye-paths——"

"Arrah, don't be so frightful !" said Rory, with a tone of contempt in his voice, which he could not control at this exhibition of poltroonery : "it's a short cut of full two miles to quit the road here and head up the banks of the sthream through the glin of the Folly."

"Bless my soul !" said Scrubbs, laying his hand on Rory's arm and making a dead stand ;





—“surely you’re not a-going through that horrid lonely place !”

“In throth I am,” said Rory; “and if you don’t like to come, as I said before, you may go back.”

Scrubbs was in a painful state of doubt ; he could not tell which he dreaded most — the Folly or Finnegans ; and thus goaded by the horns of the dilemma, or rather the “Black Bull,” he ventured to go forward with Rory. After getting over about half a mile of broken ground, they topped the hill that commanded the glen of the Folly ; and when Scrubbs saw the state of swollen turbulence in which the stream swept down the valley, he asked O’More, in one of his coward tones, if he would venture to approach it.

“Sure, it won’t bite you,” said Rory.

“But it might drown you,” said Scrubbs.

“Thim that’s born for hangin’ was never meant for dhrownin’,” said Rory in a questionable tone.

“You say very odd things, O’More,” said

Scrubbs, who could not fathom whether Rory meant himself or the Collector in his last speech. “ But isn’t the valley dangerous with this dreadful flood in it ? ”

“ Faix, there will be worse than the flood in it when you and I are there ! ” said Rory, whose contempt for the Collector’s pusillanimity had so increased, that he deemed it fit subject for mirth, and did not hesitate to torment the paltry coward with an ambiguity of expression which left, in the vagueness of the allusion, the application of it open to either of them ; so that he might endure either offence or fear, as the case might be.

“ Are you sure it ’ s safe ? ” said Scrubbs.

“ It ’ s safe enough for me, anyhow,” said Rory : “ I don ’ t know if you be a dangerous person.”

“ How do you mean, dangerous ? ” said Scrubbs.

“ Likely for hurt or harm,” said Rory.

“ I hope not, O’More,” said the Collector, straining to keep up with Rory ’ s vigorous pace

as he dashed into the glen ; and as they approached the stream, he again asked his guide if he did not consider the valley impassable without much risk.

" Not in the laste," said Rory : " it's over an hour yet before the pass up the valley will be flooded."

So saying, he pressed on, and was drawing near the walls of the Folly, when he suddenly stopped and said to Scrubbs,

" Didn't you hear a shout ?"

" Where ?" said the Collector, getting as close to him as he could.

" I thought I heerd a halloo," said Rory : " listen !"

A burst of thunder followed : the Collector shuddered.

" I suppose 'twas only the storm," said Rory. " Let us push on ;" and he made a few more vigorous strides, when his course was again arrested by a loud shout which was audible in one of the lapses of the tempest,— and this time even Scrubbs heard it.

The shout proceeded from the grated window of the vault where De Welskein and his companions were imprisoned. They, seeing two men in the valley, had raised their combined voices in one wild chorus of despair, to attract their attention ; and observing the successful result of their first effort, they again essayed to arrest their observation in the same manner : and when the men paused the second time, De Welskein took his handkerchief from his neck, and waving it through the bars of his dungeon as a further means of attracting notice, a third tremendous yell issued from the inundated vault.

“ Look, look !” said Rory, pointing to the handkerchief he saw waving from the Folly ; “ some one is callin’ for help there !”—and he was going forward to the spot, when Scrubbs laid his hand upon him, and said,

“ You wouldn’t be mad enough to go !”

“ Why not ?” said Rory.

“ You don’t know who may be there.”

“ What is it to me who they are ? — they want help,” said Rory, “ and that’s enough.”

" Let me beg of you, O'More !" said Scrubbs, endeavouring to detain him.

Rory shook him off, and said very decidedly, " Mr. Scrubbs, if *you're* afeard, that's no raison *I* should be ; and if you'd lave a fellow-craythur in want o' help, God forbid I'd do the like ! There's some accident there beyant, and I'll go see if I can be of any use."

With these words Rory ran towards the Folly ; and Scrubbs followed, because he was afraid to remain alone.

On approaching sufficiently close to recognise persons, the wonder was mutual between those within and those without the vault at the rencounter.

" Murdher ! is it you, Mr. Divilskin !" said Rory. " Why, thin, what brought you there at all ?"

It would be vain to attempt to describe the confused and almost unintelligible conversation that ensued : it was rather a volley of vociferation on both sides, — the Frenchman shouting "*Ouvrez vite !*" while the other pri-

soners were exclaiming, “Rory, for the love o’ God, make haste, or we’ll be dhrownded!”

“Wait a minit, and I’ll settle the business for you,” said Rory. “Sure, and wasn’t it the hoighth o’ good luck I happened to have the crow-bar with me!” And as he spoke, he put the powerful implement between the bars of the grated window, and wrenched the rusted irons from their sockets; then, giving a hand to De Welskein, he assisted him in his egress through the newly-made opening; and in a few seconds the whole party, so lately incarcerated in a dangerous dungeon, were liberated even by the very man against whose safety one of their party had endeavoured to direct their vengeance! And now a terrible example was given of the facility with which past mercies are forgotten, and of the hardness of the human heart when brutalised by vice:—these very men, rescued from a perilous position, and perhaps a horrible death, the moment they were released gave way to their vengeful feelings, and thought not of extending to a fellow-

creature the mercy that Heaven had shown towards them.

Flannerty and Regan were the first to notice, with triumph, the presence of Scrubbs, and they pointed it out to the party with an exclamation of blasphemous rejoicing.

"By the holy, we're in luck afther all ; for there he is,—the very chap we were waitin' for!"

They pointed to Scrubbs as they spoke ; and he, whose fears were sufficiently awake before, now pressed close beside Rory, who could feel his tremor as he leaned for support against him. The meaning of the desperadoes was too evident to be mistaken,—it was manifest their menacing intentions were directed against the Collector ; but as Rory did not know their motive for such a proceeding, he said firmly,

"Why, what do you want with him?"

"We jist want to take a loan of him," said Jack Flannerty, who advanced.

"See, Flannerty," said Rory, who extended his arm as he spoke, in token of his desire

to keep a distance between the parties,—“ Mr. Scrubbs was in the village beyant, and his horse fell undher him; and bein’ obligeed to walk home, he said he’d go along with me. When I was comin’ this way by the short cut, — as you know it is towards my place,— Mr. Scrubbs asked me to go by the high-road; but I towld him this was the best way. Now, boys,” said he, appealing to the whole party, “ you wouldn’t like, yourselves, if you promised to lade a man safe, that he should come into throuble afther: and when I tell yiz this, I’m sure you’ll put no hurt nor harm on the Collecthor.”

“ By gor, if you go make a bellweather o’ yourself to sitch fellows as that over the counthry, it’s a busy time you’ll have of it, my buck,” answered Flannerty—“ and I’d recommend you to let it alone for the futhur: and indeed, if you’ve any regard for your own charâcther, the less you have to do wid sitch cattle the betther, Rory, my boy. So, jist be aisy, and don’t be howldin’ your head so high.”

“ I howld my head no higher than any

honest man may howld it," said Rory : " and I say that the man who has any honour in his heart wouldn't touch him that's beside me afther what I say."

" To the devil wid you and your honour !" shouted Regan. " Will your honour save Darby Daly from bein' hanged when that vagabone swares his life away ?—and you wantin' to save the villian ! — but 'birds of a feather flocks together.' "

" You 're a slandherous scoundhrel, Regan," cried Rory, " and it 's not the first lie you said of me."

Rory was about to advance on O'More, who, raising his crow-bar in the act of striking, exclaimed fiercely, " Keep back, or by the mother that bore me I 'll brain you ! "

Flannerty dragged back Regan and said, " I 'll tell you what it is, Rory, the Collecthor there *is wanted*, and there 's no use in your makin' any bones about it, for we are enough to have our will ; so do what we plaze, or we 'll make you."

" Don't betray me, O'More," cried Scrubbs.

"Bethray you!" said Rory, looking with withering contempt on the craven beside him. "You dirty hound, who *would* run afther my foot,—to say sitch a word to me afther what you 've heerd! You 're not worth saving, you poor-sperited cur!—but it's for my own sake that I won't have the man undher my protection harmed.—Boys, let us pass!"

"No, we won't," said Flannerty; "we'll have him;" and he was advancing with some others.

"Boys!" cried Rory in an appealing tone, "I saved *your* lives five minutes ago, and all I ask is that you 'll let us go quietly out o' this."

There was a shout of "No!" from the group. The trembling Collector laid hold of Rory.

"Don't grip me that way, or I can't fight!" said Rory: "mind yourself, you 'd betther." Turning to the group, he then added, "I towld you I considher I'm bound in honour to this man to see him safe, and if you haven't the heart to feel it; more shame to you! But if it goes to

that, by the seven blessed candles you'll walk over my body before you git him!" And he threw himself into a posture of defence, and, with the weapon he held, he was a formidable adversary.

" Didn't I tell yiz all he was a thraitor!" said Regan. " If he wasn't, would he do what he's doin'?—Do you believe me now?"

At the moment, and under the peculiar circumstances, joined to foregone suspicions of Rory's fidelity, the words of Regan were like sparks on gunpowder: there was a shout from the group and a rush on Rory, who felled two of his assailants to the earth as they advanced upon him, while the wretched Scrubbs struck not a blow in his own defence. While Rory was keeping up an unequal fight against numbers, his vindictive enemy Shan Dhu came behind him, and giving him a severe blow under the ear, for the first time had the satisfaction of seeing Rory stagger beneath his stroke. In a moment Rory was overpowered and secured; and he and Scrubbs, the latter of whom prayed

in the most abject manner for mercy, were dragged within the walls of the Folly and their limbs secured by strong cords; for until this measure was put in practice, Rory continued to struggle for his liberty.

When he was rendered quite powerless, he and the Collector were placed in an upper apartment of the ruin, with one man to keep watch over them; while the others remained on the ground story, to consult what should be done with the prisoners. Jack Flannerty still recommended "the dog's knock," and Solomon chimed in his chorus of evil omen, that "dead men tell no tales;" but the majority dreaded this extreme measure, and determined on sending Scrubbs and Rory over sea. They were obliged, however, to wait until night should favour their undertaking, as in the daylight to transport their prisoners would be impossible.

While the council were consulting below, Rory and the Collector were engaged with their own thoughts in the apartment above. Rory in his heart cursed the unlucky chance that had

thrown Scrubbs in his way, as, to his company he very justly attributed his mishap; and yet the generosity of his temper forbade him to reproach the author of his misfortune with being the cause of it, while he saw him trembling for his safety, and heard the moans which escaped from his pale and quivering lips.

As for Scrubbs, such was his grovelling nature, that even after the noble conduct of Rory, he was still suspicious of his having led him into the trap, and that his resistance was only pretence; and at last, the base wretch ventured to give his filthy suspicion words.

"Oh, O'More," faltered he, "why did you betray me into their hands!"

"Is it to me you have the ingratitude to say the word," said Rory, "afther my runnin' the risk o' my life to save you!"

"Oh, they won't hurt you, you know; but they 'll murder me!"

"How do you know they won't hurt me? There's thim among thim ready enough to belie and wrong me; and my strivin' to save you

has made me as bad to thim in their eyes as yourself."

" Oh, they won't touch you — you *know* they won't ; and speak to them for me, — do, O'More !"

" I see the mane suspicions you have, Mr. Scrubbs ; and in throth it's a pity an honest man should get into throuble on your account, for you're not worth it. You think I'm cullogueing with these vagabones, and that I only *purtinded* to fight, and all that ; and if you worn't as bad yourself as to do the like, you wouldn't suspect another of it. Get out wid you, you mane-spirited dog ! Throth, your heart is a dunghill, and suspicion is the cock that crows on it !"

Notwithstanding all this abusive outbreak on Rory's part, Scrubbs contrived to writhe himself over nearer to him, (for both men were bound hand and foot and lying on the ground;) and getting so close as to be able to whisper to him, so that the sentinel over them should not hear, he said,

"If you'll get me out of their power, I'll give you a hundred pounds, and make a man of you."

"Keep your dirty bribes and thoughts to yourself, if you plaze,—I want neither of them. Make a man o' me indeed ! God made a man of me already, and thanks be to him for it !—it's more than he done for you, you pitiful coward, who hadn't the heart even to sthrike a blow in your defence. Get out ! and don't pison my ears with your nasty thoughts."

Regan soon after entered the apartment, having left the group below, when the consultation was over, with the base desire of enjoying the sight of Rory's prostration. He told the man on guard he came to relieve his watch and take charge of the safety of the prisoners ; and as soon as the other had descended he approached O'More, and stood over him with malignant enjoyment. Rory looked up at him and said,

"Shan Dhu, what's this for ?"

"For thraitors," answered Regan.

"I'm no thraitor," said Rory.

" You lie !" growled the brute.

" If I wasn't tied as I am, you darn't say the word to me," said Rory.

" Keep a civil tongue in your head, or it 'ill be worse for you," said Regan.

" You 're no man, Shan, or you wouldn't do this !"

" If you say another uncivil word, I 'll kick you till I make you black, as a thraitorous dog ought to be kicked."

" You 're a black-hearted coward !" cried Rory, as fiercely as if he were at liberty.

The savage who stood over him proved the truth of the words by giving him a fierce kick on the side with his heavy brogue, which took away his breath ; and it was only the sound of ascending footsteps that interrupted Regan in his brutality : he withdrew from the prisoners to the door.

" You're wanted below," said the man who entered the apartment which Regan quitted.

" O'More," said the Collector, who was convinced by the fierce reality of Regan's conduct

that Rory was in the hands of enemies as well as himself, “ I see I was wrong in what I thought about this affair.”

“ It’s likely to be worse with us too, I’m afeard,” said Rory.

“ Do you remember what you said when I asked you if the valley wasn’t dangerous, when we came into the glen ?”

“ No.”

“ You said we should find something more dangerous than the flood in it. You spoke it in fun, O’More :— it has come true, to your sorrow.”

“ I found more than I bargained for, ‘ faith ! — But, now that you remind me of sayin’ that, there’s something else it puts me in mind of that I said also — and equally threue, to our cost.”

“ What was that ?” asked the Collector.

“ I said, ‘ thim that was born to be hanged would never be dhrownded ; ’ and sure enough, I saved the vagabones from the dhrowndin’ — and ‘pon my sowl I’m much mistaken if the gallows won’t be busy wid some o’ thim yet !”

"I tell you what it is, Rory O'More," said the man who was keeping guard over them — "devil a much harm I wish you, and maybe there's not much harm intindid you ; but I'd recommend you to keep a civil tongue in your head, or maybe it 's little more you 'll ever spake. Now take that as a word to the wise."

Rory took the hint — for the words were spoken in a tone that implied the speaker had rather a friendly feeling than otherwise, and to advice, so given, he attended. Powerless as he lay, however, and in the hands of enemies as he was, he did not despair : his fertile brain was at work in many a wild conjecture as to what the intention of his captors could be, and in forming contrivances how he might outwit them and make good his escape.

After some hours thus spent, at length he and his fellow-prisoner were raised from their recumbent position ; and the ligatures being removed from their legs, they were taken from their place of confinement and desired to walk in silence in the midst of the smugglers. It

was night, and still continued to rain and blow violently; so that no time could be more favourable to their purpose of removing Rory and Scrubbs with all speed and secrecy to the coast. After walking some miles, they stopped at a cabin in a very lonely situation; where having knocked for admittance, the door was opened by a man of ruffianly appearance, whom Rory had never seen before, though the rest of the party were known to him. Here refreshment was called for; and though the fare was coarse, it was acceptable after their walk in the rain. To Rory it was particularly so, for he had been fasting since breakfast, and notwithstanding his questionable position he had too much courage to let such an occurrence spoil his appetite. But fear had taken such possession of the cowardly Collector, that he could not swallow a morsel, and a glass of spirits was all he could get down.

During the time they were in the house, nothing was spoken in presence of the prisoners which could enlighten them as to the smuggler's

intentions. Indeed, there was more silence than usual amongst so many Irishmen ; and whenever any communication seemed to be desired between any of the parties, they either conversed in low whispers beside the fire, or beckoned towards the door, and preferred making their confidences outside in the rain, to incurring the risk of being overheard by Rory or the Collector.

After some time, a car and horse were provided, and Scrubbs and Rory again bound by the feet and placed on the car. In vain did Rory request the privilege of being allowed to walk ! “ Tare an ‘ouns !” said he, “ whatever you do, don’t make a pig or a cawf o’ me, and spanshel me up on a car as if you wor dhrivin’ me to market !”

“ Howld your tongue and do what you’re bid !” was the only answer he received.

In this fashion they pushed on some miles further, and then making another halt, two of the men and De Welskein obtained horses, and the prisoners being consigned to their care, the rest

of the escort dropped off. They travelled thus all night, and the horse which drew the car was urged to as much speed as he could effect under the draught of so lumbering a vehicle, to the no small cost of poor Rory's ribs ; for when at dawn they came to a halt, at a house equal in loneliness to the one they had first entered, and loosening Rory's bands, desired him walk in, it was as much as he could do to command the use of his limbs, so benumbed and bruised had he become in the course of this nocturnal kidnapping journey.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GIVING AN EXAMPLE OF MAGISTERIAL SEVERITY AND
MATERNAL TENDERNESS.

IN some days, the disappearance of the Collector produced a great sensation in the country. As far as a day went, his absence from home without being accounted for, however it might cause surprise, gave nobody any uneasiness ; but when a second day elapsed without his reappearance within his own walls, it caused inquiry, and inquiry seemed only to perplex people more,—that is, as long as they inquired where most they expected to find intelligence of him. But in this case, as in most others of the sort, chance did more than intention, and the clue to the disappearance of the Collector was found by the casual visit of a customer to the “Black Bull.” This person was no other than Sweeny,

who was a crony of Scrubbs, and supplied his wife with patent medicine, while her husband gave him pettyfogging jobs of various sorts: therefore, when his patron was missing, Sweeny offered his services in the endeavour to find him. In so doing, he had overridden his horse one day; and arriving at the "Black Bull," he stopped to give the animal some rest and a feed, for it was yet some miles to his own home.

On following his horse into the stable, what was his surprise to see Scrubbs' steed, which still remained under the care of Larry Finnegan, who kept him until he should be sent for, and had not as yet heard of the Collector's disappearance!

"Hello!" exclaimed the attorney, "what brings Mr. Scrubbs' horse here?"

"He left him here himself last Sunday," was the answer.

"And where is Mr. Scrubbs himself?"

"How should I know?"

"Because he was here last!"

"Last Sunday he was, sartainly; but—"

"Ay, *but* — there's the thing ! — what has become of him since?"

"How should I know?"

"Because this is the last place at which I have heard of him: and if you can't give a satisfactory account of the matter, I can tell you it will be a serious business."

This led at once to an explanation of the circumstances which had occurred at the "Black Bull;" and the upshot of the business was, that Scrubbs had left the house in company with Rory O'More, and had not since been heard of. The next step to take, of course, was to go to Rory O'More and ask him what had become of the Collector: but Sweeny did not like to make the visit alone, for this bit of mystery, connected with Rory's name, aroused all the latent suspicions of him, which the appearance of the Colonel's pass had somewhat qualified, if not dispelled; and the remembrance of De Lacy's case of pistols, and his manifest promptness to use them, exercised so potent an influence over the attorney, that he determined to visit Rory

with *witnesses*. This was his legal reason for the step ; but the fact was, that Sweeny's courage was of a very companionable nature.

To the captain of the yeomanry corps, therefore, he hied him ; and that noble commander, on Sweeny's detailing the occasion of his application, determined to pay a second visit to Rory's cottage, with all the force of his troop he could muster at a short notice.

In this determination let us leave them for the present, and take a peep at the quiet domicile they threatened with their visit.

Though Rory was expected to return to his home the day he left it with De Lacy, yet his absence created no alarm, though Mary and his mother sat up late in expectation of his coming home. When the next day elapsed without his making his appearance, they concluded he could not prevail on himself to part with De Lacy at the village, and that he had accompanied him all the way to the coast.

In this satisfied belief they had indulged up to the period that the yeomanry captain put his

plan of making an armed descent on the widow's cottage into execution ; and it was with no small surprise and alarm she saw her humble walls again environed by the amateur dragoons. The captain and Sweeny demanded, on entering the house, to see Rory.

" He 's not here, plaze your honour," said the widow.

" Where is he ?" said they.

Now this was rather a poser, for the widow did not like to tell the cause of Rory's absence—or, indeed, it would be fitter to say, did not dare to tell it,—and so she "beat about the bush" as well as she could for some time, until, from the nature of her answers, the captain had his deepest suspicions strengthened, and he said,

" The fact is, he is afraid to show himself, and is concealed."

" What should he be afeard of, sir ?" said the widow.

" He 's concealed !" said the captain, " and we must search for him.—And where is the gentleman you had living here with you ?"

"He's left the place, sir."

"Ho, ho! the same story of *him* too! We must look for them, then."

With these words, they proceeded, with those under their command, to pull to pieces a stack of hay and another of corn that stood in Rory's haggart, much to the dismay of the poor widow. In vain she protested, in vain she besought: they were bent on the work they had set about.

"Sure, if you think they're hid, gentlemen, sarche the house first, at laste, before you go pull my little bit of hay and whate to pieces!"

"Oh, we know better than that! They wouldn't hide in the house;—but they may be here."

"Well, sure, if they be, you can prod the stacks with your swoords; but, for God's sake, don't pull the stacks to pieces, and it rainin'. Sure, you won't lave them worth a thraneen! and you *wouldn't* ruin the little thrifle of substance the poor widow has left!"

The appeal was unheeded; they searched not

within the house, nor did they satisfy themselves by prodding the stacks with their blades, (which was a common practice in those times,) but they pulled down the scanty savings of her little farming, under the pretence of finding those they were in search of; and in doing this, they were not guilty of any extraordinary atrocity, for in those times it was the common practice to destroy as much of the property of suspected people as the slightest pretext would admit. But these merciless fellows did not only bereave the lone woman of the accumulated produce of her little farm, but bragged of their humanity in not burning her haggart before her eyes.

“ God help me !” said the distracted woman, wringing her hands. “ Sure, it’s all one whether you desthroy me by fire or wather ! You’ve pulled my little hay and corn about the place in the middle of the rain ; and what good is it afther that ? Oh, how will I ever pay my bit of rint ! Oh, weira ! weira ! Burn it, indeed !” said she as her wrongs gave her

courage to speak more openly; “throth, you’re welcome to burn it, if you’re able, afther the wettin’ it has got now.”

In the Dublin *Castle* journals of the day, this circumstance was set forth at great length, with a flourishing encomium on the *Christian* forbearance of the “— Horse, in having merely *searched* the haggart of the person who had murdered (*as it is believed*) Jonathan Scrubbs, Esq. of — Lodge, in the County of —, without having burned to the ground (*as they ought to have done*) every stick and stone belonging to the papist ruffian.”

The widow, as yet, had not heard of the disappearance of the Collector, nor of his having been last seen in company with Rory; therefore she was unconscious of any cause of uneasiness on the score of her son, and had nothing to lament over but her ruined haggart. Another day, however, had not passed without her hearing of the occurrence, with all the varieties of account that rumour with her hundred tongues sends far and wide on such occasions.

The “Black Bull” was the centre whence these reports radiated ; for, from the moment of Sweeny’s visit there, and recognition of Scrubbs’ horse, curiosity was at work to know “what in the world could have become of the Collector ;” and when Rory O’More could not be heard of, the anxiety to unravel the mystery increased. In this state of things it was that the crowbar which Rory O’More had taken with him from the public-house was found in the glen of the Folly : — this led to further investigation ; recent footmarks near the ruin, bearing the appearance of *a struggle*, were observed. The bars wrenched from the grated window, and the evidences of the recent habitation of the vault, gave rise to many conjectures ; and a grand field of mystery, with a noble standing crop upon it, was thus opened to the whole community, who began to reap away at it with might and main, and a very noble harvest of wonder was soon gathered ; nor were there wanting gleaners to follow up the work and bring in the last precious grains of the incomprehensible.

The widow heeded not the various forms which the story assumed, for every subordinate interest was lost in the one all-absorbing consideration to her, that her son was missing ; and in this feeling Mary participated. In a few days, however, an additional pang was added to her grief ; for the Scrubbs party had no hesitation in saying the Collector had been murdered, and that Rory O'More was guilty of the crime. When the poor woman became possessed of this report, her agony of mind was excessive—an agony relieved only by occasional indignation that her boy should be so maligned : but this temporary relief being of an exciting, instead of a soothing character, her mind was kept in a state of tumult almost bordering on distraction.

“ Oh, that I ever should see the day,” she would exclaim, “ my darlin’ boy should be accused of murdher ! Oh, that my grey hairs should suffer the disgrace ! Oh, Rory, Rory ! where are you ?—where are you ? Why don’t you come and give them the lie ?—for you

never done it,—never, never, never! You murdher? — You, that wouldn't hurt a fly? Oh, my boy! my boy!"

"Mother dear!" exclaimed Mary, weeping as she spoke, "don't take on so—don't, mother dear, or you'll break my heart!"

"Oh, Mary, Mary! isn't it bad enough we've lost our darlin', our pride, and our prop—isn't it bad enough he's gone for ever from us, without his name bein' blackened to the world? Sure, when my darlin' was taken from me, the laste they might have left me was the bright remembrance of him without stain or blame! Oh, the hard-hearted crew!—to rob the lone widow of a mother's pride; and when the grave had swallowed her darlin', to put disgrace over him for his tombstone!"

She wrung her hands and kept rocking in her seat, while Mary in vain attempted to soothe her.

"Don't be talkin' of his grave, mother dear; sure, we don't know but——"

Here the mother interrupted her with a wild

burst of thought caught up from the passing word—

“ Thru, thru !—we don’t know where he lies : — Oh, if I did, I ’d go there and throw myself on my Rory’s grave, and brake my heart, and make my last bed there with him ! But my heart *is* broke— broke — broke ! and the sooner the grave closes over me the betther !”

“ Oh ! don’t talk that way, mother,— for God’s sake don’t ! Sure, you wouldn’t lave your poor Mary alone !”

“ No, *alanna*!—no, if I could help it :—but how can I live afther him ! And you—you won’t live afther him either — for you loved him like your life ; and soon we ’ll follow him, and lave the cowld world, for it *is* cowld and blake to us now without him. And the disgrace—the disgrace ! *He* a murdherer !—But who ’ll believe it ?—Will thim that knew him believe it ?—Never, never !”

“ No, mother dear—no, they won’t !”

“ You don’t think they will, Mary ? God

bless you, child, for the word ! No — who could believe it of *him*, that had the kindest heart and the proudest spirit ?—*he* disgrace his name — *he* lave reproach for his sisther's portion, and despair for his mother's closing days ! —no, they can't believe it.”

“ No, mother dear, they can't !”

“ Thim that could scatter the widow's substance to the winds may say it,—but they won't be believed ; and the fair name of my dead boy will be sstronger than the lies of the living.”

In this belief the forlorn woman was right ; and when she found the peasantry gave no credit to the rumour, and that, however they were unable to account for Rory's disappearance and the suspicious circumstances attending it, they entertained no doubt of his innocence, the widow became more reconciled, and bore her loss with greater fortitude. The universal sympathy also which she found in her neighbours tended to support her ; and when she heard the accusation against Rory repelled

as indignantly in his own class as by herself, she was much soothed, as the exemption of her son's name from disgrace relieved her from more than half the weight of her affliction.

Foremost in the tender offices of condolence was Kathleen Regan — if that might be called condolence which was rather a communion of affliction. The meeting of the two girls in the Widow O'More's cottage was very touching. Without their having ever spoken on the subject, the love of Rory and Kathleen was perfectly well understood between them; and when Kathleen crossed the threshold of her lost lover's cottage, she could not speak a word,— but both girls looked at each other for a moment in silent agony, and rushing with open arms into an embrace of sorrowing endearment, they wept upon each other's neck.

The girls had always liked each other, but now a fresh motive of attachment existed between them. Kathleen saw in the sister whom Rory loved so well an object to be additionally fond of for his sake; and Mary, in looking on

the girl to whom her brother had given his heart, was similarly influenced : and thus their friendship at once became increased to affection, and a portion of the love that each had borne to Rory they transferred upon each other. They often met, and for hours together would talk over their bereavement, and, after some time, were forced to admit the long-combated belief to their hearts, that Rory was dead ; for as Conolly's evidence was conclusive that he did not accompany De Lacy, they knew of no cause short of death for his absence.

It was in one of these conversations Mary O'More told Kathleen that, after all which they heard about the glen of the Folly, and the many times it had been examined, she would wish very much to visit the place herself, and search it carefully up and down, — but it being so solitary, she did not like going alone, and asked Kathleen to bear her company. A ready assent was given to the proposal, and the girls spent a whole day in making a careful survey of the valley, — from

the Folly up to the wild and rocky gorge where the glen was shut in by a bluff barrier of cliff down which the stream tumbled.

Though making no observation tending to clear up the mystery, their visits were often repeated; and notwithstanding their continued ill-success in every endeavour to elucidate the fatal cause which had bereft them of Rory, yet there was a melancholy pleasure in being on the spot he was last traced to. The frequency of their walks in the glen had so accustomed them to the place, that habit had overcome their fear of its loneliness, and sometimes each girl went there alone.

It was on one of these occasions when Mary O'More had wandered nearly to the end of the glen, that she was startled by hearing the sound of a coarse voice which made her blood run cold. She paused and listened, and in the lapse of a few moments became conscious she heard the voice of Shan Regan, and with a hasty and cautious step the terrified girl ran higher up the glen; and doubling swiftly round

a projecting rock, she struck into a small hazel-wood that promised shelter, and crouching under the bushes and rank grass, sought concealment from the man whose presence she loathed and dreaded. The sound of footsteps approached ; she could scarcely breathe : they came nearer ; she trembled so violently, as scarcely to prevent the bush which sheltered her from rustling with her tremor,—and in another instant Regan was visible a few paces below her, standing at the foot of the rock round whose angle she had just passed.

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